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614 to the sub-clan, one may presume that the large size of the typical sub-clan and its necessary dispersion prevent the assembling of anything more than a very limited part of its membership. This is certainly the case among the southern Santal, though I have been told that on a few occasions members of a sub-clan have assembled within a territory as broad as the whole district of Mayurbhanj. But such meetings are difficult to arrange and so costly that they cannot be frequent.

The named sub-clan, like the clan, serves to orient kin relations, and as mentioned, enables strangers to be taken into the bosom of a functioning local lineage. It is also the exogamous unit par excellence, i.e., marriage within the sub-clan is unthinkable incest while marriage within the clan, though it is forbidden and usually punished, is a much less serious offense. This difference reflects the much larger size of the clan, the relative weakness of its internal connections, and the lack of "likenesses" within its far-flung organization.

613 But it is the local lineage which has a truly corporate character, though this corporateness is largely confined to ceremonial activity. The members of this unit share common "house
613 776 deities" (*orak' boṅga* = house deity) and ancestral spirits, and
• 782 they celebrate these together at about two- to six-year intervals.
[92] These celebrations, in which all male members of the local lineage join together, are held in fields and known as "field worship" (*thandi boṅga* = field deity). Each local lineage has its own distinctive ritual practices, and these practices tend to be kept in considerable secrecy, often being held in fields remote from any village and at hours when villagers are likely to be asleep. Some lineages maintain that anyone viewing their ritual offerings at "field worship" will be stricken ill and die. Still, a number of local lineages invite a few non-lineage members

613 776 782 to participate in a prescribed way in this ceremony; in particular they are often asked to become "possessed" (*rum*) and represent either the spirits of the ancestors and/or Marañ Buru, the chief deity of the Santal. It is these spirits, representing as they do the unity of the Santal and the local lineage respectively, that must give their approval of the food and other offerings presented to them by the lineage. Non-members thus serve as properly objective outsiders in making this judgment, even though it is done in a state of "possession" in which they are the vehicles of the deity and spirits. It is interesting that these outsiders are frequently mother's brothers or other relatives of a woman married into the lineage; in this way the affinal connections of the local lineage are also given recognition in this ceremony.

The expressions of the Santal regarding this rite indicate that feelings of strength and bravery within the solidary lineage are closely associated with the rites performed. As one Santal put it, "Field worship is of hero Gods; by worshipping them, courage and bravery are gained by the members of the sub-lineage." Another Santal added, "Nowadays there is no warfare, but these deities are true as anything"; a third then related a famous tale of two Santal heroes who were of his sub-clan.

764 [192] [782] [613] "Field worship" is inextricably intertwined with certain funerary rites (*bhaṇḍan*; Hindi: *Bhāṇḍa* = an earthen vessel) which are prerequisites for both "field worship" and marriage rites. Representatives of the local lineage must perform the *bhaṇḍan* after the death of any member. Among the northern [484] Santal these rites are generally performed at the Damodar [184] River; some of the southern Santal also journey to the Damodar

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On the next day the priest, accompanied by the same five
men who are again possessed and amidst almost the entire
village separated into lines of male and female dancers, pro-
ceeds to the Sacred Grove. The Goddess of the Sacred Grove
carries a large wicker basket (*daure*) perhaps as a sign of the
good harvest to come. The Five bring a bow and arrow signi-
fying bountiful game, though hunting has ceased to be of eco-
nomic significance.* *Lițe* brings an axe, the instrument which
the Santal associate most closely with the clearing of new land.
Maraṅ Buru, the national deity of the Santal, and *Goram
Boṅga*, the godly embodiment of the village founder, carry
sticks, perhaps as signs of their power. The five deities dance
around the three stones which lie within a small shed open on
all sides. The priest then sprinkles water on the stones and
smears each with vermilion. He then "greets" (*johar*) each of
the deities. The Five shoot an arrow at a Sal tree and the other
deities rush up and smell the arrow to determine omens
(*sagun*), which indicate whether the flowers of the tree would
make a satisfactory offering. The deities then present flowers
to the priest, who places them around the three stones. He
makes three circles with rice flour around the stones and within
each circle (*khond*) sun-dried rice and vermilion are applied.
A large chicken is then brought to one of the circles and made
to eat some of the sun-dried rice; then its head is cut off by
the priest. As the blood drips into the circle the priest says,
"Greeting *Maraṅ Buru*, in the name of *Baha* I am offering to
you so that headache and stomach ache may not come to us;
we give you that we may remain in good health." The same
rite is repeated with the other two stones but the names of the

* Perhaps "The Five" have some connection with "The Five People" (*Mõre Hoṛ*) which, as explained, refers to the village council.

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deities are not mentioned. After these rites the deities in the person of the five possessed ones eat the sun-dried rice that has been offered.

The priest then repairs to some open ground within the Sacred Grove which has been previously purified as described earlier; here he marks out with rice flour ten connected squares, in each of which he offers repeatedly to the five deities small or baby chickens donated by each family in the village. In prayer each of the deities is greeted and told that the offering is in the name of sowing. The priest says, "So many offerings are being made, are you not pleased?" The deities represented by the five possessed men then consume some of the sun-dried rice and the rest of the village men eat the remainder; the bodies of the chickens are also eaten by the villagers and the heads by the priest.

The final offering of the ceremony is conducted on the same day and in a similar manner but the offering is to the "boundary deities" (*sima boṅga*). The names of the surrounding villages belonging to the same Pargana are mentioned in the offering as the priest exclaims, "Whatever deities you may be, let no illness or smallpox come to us."

The priest then tenders his respect to the spirit of the founder of the village, "Old Man Headman," by moving three times about the permanent shed (*mañjhithan*) in which he dwells. The women then return to the Sacred Grove and receive flowers from the priest, who presents them with a greeting of respect like that made to an elder or a deity. Then, as the Santal say, "to show their respect for the priest," they all dance about him as he proceeds down the path of his section of the village; as he proceeds each woman washes his feet. The

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796 practical jokes performed on each other by joking relatives
• 782 such as pouring water down one another's back terminate the priest's procession.

After these rites the males of each household offer rice beer to their patrilineal ancestors. With religious obligations completed, dancing, singing, mutual visiting, eating, and drinking prevail and may continue through the evening and morning, to the exhaustion of the anthropologist but apparently not of the Santal participants.*

184 In the *bustee* celebration of *Baha*, the rites involving the
796 five possessed men are eliminated; otherwise the rites performed are similar, the major difference being in the scale of participation. Since the rites of possession are eliminated, there is no occasion on the first day of the ceremony for all the villagers to gather at the priest's house; indeed, there are no rites to be performed on this day, so that the ceremony is condensed from two days to one. On the second day there is no great procession of dancing men and women accompanying the priest to the Sacred Grove; instead a few men and boys with no fanfare walk beside him to the grove. Those who go are almost all close patrilineal relatives of the priest for whom Daredih is a native village. Of the two non-relatives whom I observed accompanying the priest, one was the only immigrant worker who had bought farming land in Daredih; the other was one of the earliest immigrants who had for that reason become assistant headman (*jogmaṅjhi*) of the section (*tola*) of the *bustee* in which the immigrant workers live. Perhaps about half of the adult males of Daredih intermittently came and left during the performance of the rites. At this time one of the

* The rites reported here vary in minor detail from village to village but not in such a manner as to alter the comparison which is made here.

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538 668 The great task that Semlet' hopes soon to undertake, and for which money is being collected, is to provide an authoritative text of Santal tradition written in the new script. At periodic Semlet' meetings one may observe eloquent representations of the cultural movement and its intimate connection with solidarity and the political rank path.

178 539 668 782 In place of traditional prayers such as: "Greetings, *Marañ Buru*; in the name of this festival I offer you so do not allow any sickness, headache, or stomach ache to come. We give to you that we may remain in good health," one hears prayers more in keeping with an emergent "Great Tradition" such as the following: "Greetings, *Marañ Buru*; be kind enough and pleased to accept my bowing and greeting. I prostrate myself before you and direct my attention to you. Come down as the wind and fly like a storm. Guide me in the path of righteousness. I bow down in all directions."

668 539 771 The following excerpts from typical speeches at Semlet' meetings give an "inside view" of the cultural movement and its social significance:

> In one village people stopped worshipping in the Sacred Grove and began to follow a Hindu sect which makes no offerings but only prays. Within three years they fell ill in every house. . . . Some "medicine man" from another village told them it is because you stopped worshipping in the Sacred Grove, so they returned to their old ways. Other people's religions will not make us strong. We should worship properly, then we can raise our religion so many will respect it.

> In ancient times it was said, and our "aboriginal" leaders also say, Sarna is our religion. The *diku* say our religion is Hindu. Then

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121
177 does not understand the words. Such practices could hardly
186 have been borrowed because of a peculiar "fit" of their content
554 with traditional Santal patterns. Certainly such practices are not
755 naturalistically more efficacious. It is rather a case of connecting status and efficacy which is expressed in the Santal reference to Hindus as "*big* and *knowing* people."

121 There is a third reason for the tendency to adopt practices
177 of the dominant society, one which follows almost inevitably
186 from the condition of being encysted. This is the "external
648 pressure" brought to bear by the dominant society on the encysted society to adopt its customs. The basis for the near inevitability of this pressure is nothing less than the solidarity needs of the dominant society. Surrounding dominant societies must demand allegiance to at least the official symbols of suzerainty; acceptance of a number of other customs is likely also to be demanded as the solidarity needs of the dominant society increase. There are likely also to be a number of customs of the encysted society which the superior society finds repugnant, a reaction which invariably creates some pressure for "reform" of the encysted society. The pressures exerted on the encysted society may include positive rewards for compliance or coercive acts by police or even by an army.

648 Perhaps the oldest and most continuous of such pressures
• 782 on the Santal has been governmental interference with Santal cow sacrifice and beef eating. Armed interference has been practiced everywhere and has not ceased under present democratic conditions. Cow sacrifice has continued, but in secret so as to avoid prosecution and interruption of the rites. However, some villages, fearing arrest and harassment, have abandoned such sacrifice, particularly where there are Hindus in the village who might report this activity to the authorities. There is no

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648 question that this pressure is the result of repugnance as well
782 as solidarity needs.

The tendency to borrow which follows rank concession un-
177 dermines solidarity, for all borrowing, by reducing distinctive-
554 ness, weakens solidarity, and borrowing of traits which directly represent solidarity is especially debilitating. Emulative borrowing not only eradicates boundary markers but is destructive of the internal aspect of solidarity, since it is likely to be more intense among segments of the encysted society with superior status. This differential emulation arises largely because of the following conditions: (1) the elite tend to have more intimate contact with members of higher social units because they are often representatives of their society in inter-societal relations, (2) they may attract a coterie belonging to higher social units but personally limited in political and economic power; such a coterie derives political and economic advantage from the relationship and confers prestige on its benefactor, (3) no amount of emulation in the absence of the requisite political and/or economic power can achieve rank improvement; the recognition of this fact contributes to differential emulation since the wealthy and powerful are the only ones in a position to attain higher rank in exogenous relations through emulation. Such differential emulation and the type of external relations described here have been noted among the Santal as well as other tribes in the area.

The impact of differential emulation on internal solidarity is to reduce "likeness" and to provide a cultural basis for di-
[184] visive status distinctions. The ubiquitousness of "envy" and connected witchcraft in Santal social relations, and the difficulty of relations between the educated Santal elite and the non-elite exemplify this effect. The cultural gap between the

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calls th young men in the village together, sending the Goḍet, and says to them: Do 585
set up a marriage-shed for us here. Thereupon he brings the village priest. When he 793
has come, the village headman says to the bridegroom's father: Please give the priest 782
three fowls, one speckled and two white ones, three half-seers of rice, one pot of beer, and the necessaries for making a sacrifice. The priest takes all this to the sacred grove or somewhere in the open field and sacrifices the fowls in the name of the marriage-shed. He makes the following invocation: Here then, Jaher era, in connexion with so and so setting up a marriage-shed I am giving thee, handing thee a sacrificial fowl; mayest thou with pleasure, with favour, accept this, receive this; mayest thou caress this, deem this big; we are now going to such and such a village to be a bridegroom's party; on the road, in the forest may no sudden fear or alarm happen to us, no stumbling, no fall, no spells, no enchantments; to the right, to the left may you toss it away, spatter it away, Father my Ṭhạkur. We shall eat, we shall drink, do not let stomach-ache, headache arise, be caused. With the friends may there be no strife, no quarrel, no evil, no enmity, no loss, no destruction, Father my Ṭhạkur. While reciting this invocation he offers the speckled fowl to Jaher era. Thereupon he sacrifices one white fowl to The Five (Mộṛệko Turuiko)[22], making a similar invocation. Lastly he sacrifices the remaining white fowl to Maraṅ buru, and to him also he recites an invocation in the same way. The village priest has brought a couple of men with him; they make a hash of the fowls and eat them, and the pot of beer they brought they also drink; thereupon they return home. 585

The Jọg Mạṅjhi then again goes to the marriage-shed and asks the young men: Have [824]
you finished the marriage-shed or not as yet? They answer him: Yes, we have finished it. The Jọg Mạṅjhi then says to them: Dig a hole in the middle of the marriage-shed; we shall put a Mahua tree down there. He next asks them: Have you finished digging the hole or not as yet? He says to them: Enlarge the hole down below in the ground. When they have done this, the Jọg Mạṅjhi says to the bridegroom's parents: Bring three branches of raw turmeric and five cowries and three tips of dhubi grass. Grind the turmeric, mix three grains of sun-dried rice into the turmeric. They collect this and cover it up in a bundle, and where they have enlarged the hole, there they put it down. When this is done, they plant the Mahua tree in the dug hole, and when they have planted the Mahua tree they wrap a straw-rope round it up to the top.

Thereupon the Jọg Mạṅjhi calls the woman, the conductor of ceremonies, and says to [343]
her: Plaster this with earth and make it smooth, and whitewash it with flour, and grind some red-ochre stone; when this is done, paint figures on the marriage-shed post, and paint pictures of the bride and bridegroom in front. The conductor of ceremonies does this.

Thereupon the Jọg Mạṅjhi says to the young men who set up the marriage-shed: This [515]
is finished; now before anything else have some food and strengthen yourselves. He goes

[22] See Santal Dictionary s. v.

6 Oslo Etn. Mus. – Bedding.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

585 [782] said to the bride and the bridegroom. When going in the forest may there be no tripping, no stumbling, no widows, no women of ill omen; spells or enchantments may not be thrown on, may not hit them; on the road, in the forest may no stomach-ache, no headache arise, come into being; — before the year turns round also for these two, for the bride and the bridegroom may we old men cover leaf-cups below the bedstead: Thou going first, we going after thee, may the bride's and the bridegroom's parties, the bride's brothers reach there in good order. Thereupon all there, the bride's people and the bridegroom's party go to the cross-road at the end of the village street.

At the cross-road they spread a mat and make the bride's mother sit down on it. They then first bring the bridegroom and make him sit down on the thigh of his mother-in-law. She washes his mouth; thereupon she three times puts molasses into his mouth, and he eats it. Now the bride's mother takes the lota with water in her hand; she washes the bridegroom's mouth and then kisses him. Thereupon he gets off, and they bring the bride. Her also she treats in the same way. After this the two wives of the brothers of the bride's father also treat the bride and the bridegroom in the same way.

Thereupon the people of the bride's village stand in rows, on one side the men and on the other side the women. The bride's mother then says to the bridal pair: Do salute them, one after the other, commencing from the village headman. They do this, the bride with the anointing girls first, and the bridegroom with his best-man and his follower after them. They salute all the men and women. After this the bridegroom's party salute all the people of the bride's village, one after the other, commencing from the village headman.

[539] Then they sing[37]:

Start, dearie, go, dearie
To your own house, dearie,
The swinging chair, dearie, is very heavy.

In the Tilai tree (Wendlandia tinctoria, DC.) plain, dearie,
I have tied, dearie, the horse.
The swinging chair, dearie, is very heavy.

In the deserted village
Sugar-cane was planted.
How sweet is that sugar-cane?

We do not know whether it is bitter,
We do not know whether it is sweet,
We do not know, how it is.

[37] All the verses are in corrupt Bihari.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

Those among the bridegroom's party who wish now go to the young people of the village and dance with them under the marriage-shed the whole night; they drum the dancing-drum and sing a good deal. The old men of the bridegroom's side say to the young men of their party, before they go to dance: Dance, young fellows, just dance, but don't touch anything; they impose fines. People who go in a bridegroom's party cannot flirt with the girls of the bride's village; if they do, they punish them very severely. On the other hand even if a young man of the bride's people flirt with the girls of the bridegroom's village, they do not make much of this. 585 [535] [534]

The next morning the Jog Mañjhi goes to the lodgings of the bridegroom's party and asks them: How is it, honoured bridegroom's party, have you had your midday-meal or not? They answer him: A while ago we have had our meal and been strengthened, and your portion we have kept for you; please be quick and send us off. They then give into his charge the big and the small earthenware pots and his five portions of food. Thereupon the bridegroom's party at once send some forerunners off in advance to their home. The Jog Mañjhi then conducts the bridegroom's party to the bride's home. The bridegroom's party dance in the street outside the bride's home.

The Jog Mañjhi thereupon goes in and says to the bride's parents: Please anoint the bride and the bridegroom with oil and turmeric; find me five young men to follow the bride, and one elderly duenna. The anointing girls anoint the bride and the bridegroom; they bring the followers of the bride and the old duenna. Then the Jog Mañjhi says: Well, let them eat and strengthen themselves. Thereupon they give the bride and the bridegroom and the bride's male followers and the old duenna food, and they eat.

Thereupon the Jog Mañjhi says to all these: Well, make yourselves ready, I shall bring the bride and the bridegroom out. While they are making themselves ready, the Jog Mañjhi says to the bride's parents: Please get me one wooden pestle, having covered the ferrule with leaves. They bring him this, and he gives it into the charge of the bride's brother. Now the Jog Mañjhi says to the bride's mother: Please arrange molasses and water in lotas and brass-cups and find a mat. The bride's mother answers him: We are all ready. Saying this she puts about one seer of paddy into a fold of the bride's cloth. The Jog Mañjhi then says: Why, where is the beer for the Mañjhi haram? They hand him this in a small pot with a cover. Taking this in his hand he says to them all: Come along, let us go out. While they are going out, the bride turns round and shakes the paddy that was put in a fold of her cloth out in the door-opening of the house, salutes it and goes away. Thereupon they go to the Mañjhi than. The bridegroom's party also go there together with the others.

The bridegroom's party are dancing, and the Jog Mañjhi pours out the beer as a libation to the dead Mañjhi haram. As he makes the libation to him, he makes an invocation: As is seen here, Mañjhi haram, I give thee, hand thee this for the sake of good-bye being [782]

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The Jog Mãjhi again goes into the house and says to the father of the bridegroom: What curry shall we give these friends? He answers: There is a castrated goat; we shall make curry of this for them. The Jog Mãjhi then calls a young man from the village. They give him one brass-cup of beer; he drinks this, and the Jog Mãjhi says to him: Look here, young man, tell all the village people, big and small: Come along, we shall make the bride's brothers pluck vegetables. The whole family, mother and children, all come and assemble in the bridegroom's home. The village people bring with them beer or rice as presents. 585

The Jog Mãjhi brings a loṭa with water out from the house and keeps it on a leaf-plate held on the palm of his hand, and one man seizes the castrated goat. The Jog Mãjhi then takes the loṭa with water to the village headman and his deputy, who salute it. Thereupon he takes it to the brothers of the bride, who also salute it. After this he takes it to the men of the village, who also salute the loṭa with water. And lastly he takes it to the women, who also in the same way salute it.

Now the Jog Mãjhi gets hold of a battle-axe and gives this to the brothers of the bride. Having tied the castrated goat with a cord he pours water on its head; thereupon he makes it eat of the rice on a leaf-plate. He then says to the brothers of the bride: Come, honoured brothers of the bride, pluck vegetables for us. They stand up, and one among them seizes the battle-axe and makes a feint with it at the castrated goat; thereupon he puts the battle-axe down. One of the men of the village then seizes the battle-axe and cuts and kills the animal. The brothers of the bride do not kill the castrated goat, because they say the marriage will then be broken. The Jog Mãjhi puts the head of the goat on the rice on the leaf-plate and takes it inside the house. He who, when the goat was cut, seized the pole, he smears the blood on some straw, and tying it to the pole he puts it down on the ground. Thereupon the father of the bridegroom pours some beer from the small vessel out as a libation where the goat was cut and killed. And in front of the bride-brother who made a feint at the goat, and the young man who seized the pole, he puts a leaf-cup down, having turned his hand upside, and he says to them: Please drink. They do this; thereupon he again gives them both one leaf-cup of beer each. [782]

The Jog Mãjhi then says to these two: Please salute each other; thereupon you will salute all here. They then salute each other like co-parents-in-law, and commencing from the village headman they salute all there. Now two young men from the village give all there two leaf-cups of poured-out beer and two leaf-cups of squeezed-out beer; when they have drunk, they keep quiet. The young people are dancing, and people who have work to do, work.

The father of the bridegroom then says to the village headman: Please, Sir, let us have the waving ceremony in good time. The headman then says to the Jog Mãjhi: Do call all the village people here; we shall see the waving ceremony. He sends the Godet to call

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of the villagers will become wealthy. In the directions in which the rats have carried off rice, in so many directions it will be necessary to bring up bongas. If the water in the narrow-mouthed pot has dwindled a little, they say about this: A couple of years we shall have a scarcity of water. And if the water has not dwindled at all, they say: We shall not have any scarcity of water. If the fowls have disappeared, if there is no rice, and the water in the narrow-mouthed pot has dried up, they say: This place is ill-fated; and they leave it; they will not found a village there. 361 787

But if there are good omens from the fowls, the rice and the water in the narrow-mouthed pot, then they dig a small four-cornered hole. On three sides of this they put the dug-out earth. With this earth they again fill the hole up. If it is filled with the earth on two sides, they say: We shall get full crops here; and if no earth is left (in filling the hole), they say: It is inauspicious here. Thereupon they seek omens in another high place inside the boundary that they have walked up, and in the name of another village headman. They continue to act in this way, until they get full good omens. They ultimately get this.

b. On settling down.

Now one day they return and make a shelter of sticks leaning against each other, for the leader. He, the leader, who is to become the headman of the village, cuts down the first tree. Nowadays, after they have investigated the forest, they ask the landowner for permission; formerly, before landowners made their appearance, there was nothing of this kind. 361

Together with the leader they now divide between themselves the homestead fields. On their respective homestead fields they each put up a hut for themselves, and each a pen to keep their cattle in. Thereupon they go back to their old homes and call on each other saying: When shall we start? They then take their children and all they possess with them and go to the new village. The time of moving is the months of Phalgun and Chait (middle of Febr. to middle of April). Now all of them clear the jungle for the homestead fields, and the trees they have cut down also serve them for house-timber. Any remaining timber, etc., they burn away. They build houses. Running along the middle of the place they keep a village street, and at the end of this they arrange a sacred grove. [778]

c. Bringing up the bongas in the sacred grove.

To bring the bongas up in the sacred grove they get three to four men who are to become possessed[1]. They come together at the village headman's. The headman pours out water for the persons to be possessed, that they may wash. The men to be possessed then wash their feet and sprinkle water on their head. Thereupon they sit down in a row beside each 782 776

[1] See Dictionary s. v. ram.

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782 776 other. They put a winnowing-fan in front of each of them. Thereupon they give each of them one handful of sun-dried rice in the winnowing-fan. The men who are to be possessed then with the right hand rub the sun-dried rice in the winnowing-fan; now the village people call out: Come, Lords, the Five, the Lady of the sacred grove, the Pargana, Marañ buru, Gosāe era, and Mañjhi haṛam, we are calling upon ye, invoking ye. Thereupon the four men become possessed and turn their heads violently round. Speaking through the mouth of the possessed men the bongas say aḍhāḷ (it is all right); thereby the village people understand that the bongas have taken possession of the inspired ones.

They then ask them: Now then, adored King, worshipped Lord, the landowners, the Munḍas with horses, with umbrellas, to the end of the lowland, to the end of the country they run about, hurry about, the spirits, the mountain spirits, be it five, be it twenty-five, with disciples, with pupils sitting, having seated themselves, in hurry, in haste, calling out, crying, the stone door having been opened, been opened a little, like a cow with calf, like a milch cow they come running, they come in haste; Well then, Lord Father, my Ṭhākur, the race, the birth, when this is told, is shown, then only we shall know, shall recognize, it is this spirit, this mountain-spirit, then only below the Pipoḷ tree, below the Banyan tree the principal stool, the principal wooden slab to sit on will be placed before him, be spread out before him, then only we shall worship him, pay homage to him[2].

The bongas then reply: Look then, be it five, be it twenty five with disciples, when you sit down with pupils, you have seated yourselves, when you have taken hold of, have seized a Mahle[3] winnowing-fan, when we discovered, found out about the cleaned rice, the mixed rice, like a cow with calf, like a milch cow I came running, I came in haste, what my race, my birth may be, I might show twelve shapes, show twelve meanings, what it is, is fully true, otherwise all is up. Wealthy people, stallions, at the back of the house, in the eaves, gold, silver they bury, put away; for what purpose should I bury, put away my race, my birth; what is, truly with happiness, with easy circumstances I may strengthen, I may apportion, it is fully up. Consequently, whoever I may be, in the Ganges river, in the Sora river my race, my birth, I may bathe, may wash my hair, with happiness, with easy circumstances I may strengthen, may apportion, it is fully up. Shopkeepers, pedlars for a seer of paddy, a basket of paddy they sell away, throw down oil, salt; as for me race and birth, whatever it may be, for a seer of paddy, for a basket of paddy I may sell it away, throw it down, with happiness, with easy circumstances I may strengthen, may apportion it, it is fully up. This is well and all. So look out, I am Jaher era (the Lady of the sacred grove).

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[2] So far as possible a literal translation of the here following invocations and answers is given; they convey very little meaning to the ordinary Santal, if they are at all understood. This, however, is not needed.

[3] I. e., made by a Mahle. The Mahles are workers in bamboo, besides being agriculturists and palanquin bearers.

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The village people then say: Greetings, Lord! After this every single bonga, one after the other, speaks the same, only at the end they name their different names. 782 776

Thereupon the village people take the rice in the winnowing-fan up in their hands, and handing it into the hands of the possessed ones they say to them: Here then, Lord Father my Thakur, the broken grain, the rice grain have no eyes, have no ears. Having understood, having satisfied yourselves in your soul, in your breast, in your mind, in your body, tell us, show us, we are blind, ignorant human beings; when we speak, it stops in our throat, we are choked in the words; therefore do not keep it, do not let it stick in your soul, in your breast; in the house of Jolhas[4], in the house of Dhunias[5] stuck thread, stuck cotton is caught up, sticks; like split bamboo, like thread stretched out make ye a way, make ye a road, Lord Father my Thakur.

The bongas then answer: Look out then, brothers, younger and older, sitting down, having seated ourselves we have understood, have satisfied ourselves as to water-country, salt-country, for whom it may be, in our souls, in our breasts we may put it, may stick it. Thereupon they say: Well that is all, it is good.

Thereupon the village people say: Please then, Lord, where shall we make a place of worship for ye, make a place for ye to stay? Now the bongas get up and go towards the forest. They find and take along some stones. Having brought them to the place they put them down, as they think well, at the foot of trees, three in a row beside each other at one place, each stone at the foot of a separate tree, one representing the Lady of the sacred grove, one representing the Five, and one Marak baru. Again going to the forest they bring three stones. One representing Gosae era they put down at the foot of a Mahua tree, one representing the old Pargana they put down at the foot of any tree, and the one representing Mañjhi haram they bring to the village street and put it down in the street outside the house of the village headman. Here they later on build a structure, the Mañjhi than.

They then sit down at the place where they first were. And the village people say: Please, Lord, by whose hand are ye pleased to be worshipped and offered to? Find a priest for yourselves. And they place a loṭa with water in front of them. The bongas then get up. The Lady of the sacred grove takes the loṭa with water, and the bongas call out: Ei (hallo there). Taking this loṭa with water along the bongas choose the priest for themselves among the men. Any one they like, on his head they pour out the water in the loṭa.

Now all the people stand up, and the man they have chosen to be priest puts the bongas (stones) nicely down, one after the other, and he plasters there with cow-dung, and he smears sindur on all the bongas.

Now they are going to restore the possessed bongas to consciousness. The priest gives the rice in the winnowing-fan into the hands of the possessed bongas. Then they say to

[4] Mohammedan weavers. [5] Mohammedan cotton-workers.

782 them: Please, Lords, the promise you gave is a promise, your promise is a golden promise,
776 ours is a skin promise, please give us a hand-given promise, before you leave. A promise given is a promise, a promise of luck and good fortune, may they never become false and worthless. Thereupon the bongas, one after the other, give to the priest the rice they have in their hand. The village people then say: Please, Lords, it has been a long time, and it is very late, the horses, the umbrellas in the Siṅ forest, the Man forest[6], dig and fill their stomach with hasa vegetables, with ḍimbu vegetables[7]. Then the possessed men regain consciousness. The rice mentioned the men who were possessed take. And having reached the village they enter the headman's house, where they give them food. This is the way in which the bongas are brought up in the sacred grove.

d. The assistants of the village headman.

622 Thereupon all the men come together at the Mạṅjhi (the village headman). He has
624 brewed beer. Now as he deems the men in the village fit, in accordance with this he chooses some to assist him in the village; he appoints them to positions: You become our Paranik, you become our Goḍet. And if there are sufficient people, he will at the same time also appoint a Jọg Mạṅjhi and a Jọg Paranik. And one for whom it is possible to offer his own blood, he will appoint to be Kuḍạm Naeke. He gives them beer; they drink and then gradually go home.

622 The Mạṅjhi is the head of the village people. All people in the village will have to follow his lead. In ordering and inviting, in calling and restraining, at the namegiving, at the initiating festivals, at marriages, when hunting and chasing, at feasts and festivals, at religious instruction and worship, in connexion with rice and curry, with beer and liquor, with spirits and mountain spirits, in quarrelling and squabbling, in strife and dispute, when there is hunger and thirst, with landlords and money-lenders, when crime and misdeeds occur, in connexion with thefts and stealing, with medicine and witchcraft, with wenches and strumpets, when there is fighting and killing, murder and wickedness, in grief and sorrow, in calamities and dangers, in illness and pain, at dying and falling away, at ceremonies in connexion with death and decease, at cremation and the final funeral ceremonies: in connexion with all this the Mạṅjhi has the responsibility.

624 The Paranik is the headman's assistant, like a prime minister, and when there is no Mạṅjhi, the Paranik rules the village. If the headman should run away, and there are no sons or male relatives of his, the Paranik becomes Mạṅjhi. Or if the Mạṅjhi dies without having sons, and there also are no male relatives of his in the village, then also the Paranik becomes Mạṅjhi.

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[131] [137] [6] The Siṅ and Man forests seem to have reference to the Singbhum and Manbhum districts to the South-west of the Santal Parganas. Santals have been and are still living in these districts. [7] Hasa is a Rusilla; ḍimbu a creeper.

782 The Kuḍąm Naeke (the priest of the outskirts) offers his own blood every time the
Naeke performs sacrifices, in the name of the Pargana bongs and the bongas along the
793 boundaries. At Janthaṛ (the first fruit offering of the heavy rice) he every year sacrifices a pig to the Pargana bongs, and at that time he also offers his own blood to him and to the bongas along the boundaries. At the hunt he offers to the same, in order that the village people may be fortunate and return well. At this time he makes an invocation: Greetings then, O Pargana, blood offering, pricked out blood is given, is offered to thee for the sake of the hunt, where on the right side or the left side a servant girl or a dog puppy, a lǫṭǫ thorn (a thorny bush), a kaṛk's thorn (a pricking bush)[3] may be, in holes and recesses, mayest thou press it down, cover it up. A worn-out winnowing-fan, a ball of cotton thou wilt arrange for us, make security for us, Father my Ṭhąkur, Lord.

e. The division of agricultural land.

621 When they have appointed the rulers of a new village, then they sit one day and divide
the land and homestead fields. They make units. One unit of agricultural land is what
423 is needed for one plough. Having settled this they fix the rent, and at the same time set aside the land allotted to the offices of Mąṅjhi, Paranik, Jǫg Mąṅjhi, Jǫg Paranik, Goḍet, Naeke, and Kuḍąm Naeke. The Mąṅjhi gets four portions, the Paranik gets three portions, the Jǫg Mąṅjhi gets two portions, and the others one portion each as office-land. This they have the use of without paying rent. The Mąṅjhi had formerly half a rǫk (unit) following his office. Nowadays some village headmen have very large incomes.

245 In a new village people plant Horse-radish trees and Pipol trees near their respective houses. They eat the Horse-radish tree vegetables and the Pipol tree they have to get shade, and the Pipol tree, it is said, will be of use also in the next world.

When other people see that they get very good crops in a new village, they also will
621 come and settle down there. The old residents will give them a share, a little of their prepared ricefields and of their highland fields, and the headman will show them fallow land to prepare ricefields. Then the village becomes populous. They work, do their business, they eat and drink, they have dances and games, they enjoy themselves, they live there.

f. Wealthy and poor people.

556 In the same village it does not go equally well for all there. Some people have both plough-cattle and servants; they are both industrious and also have sense, and they are also very niggardly; such people become wealthy. But some people have, to start with, no plough-cattle; they are also alone; they also suffer a good deal from fever; they have no sense; they are foolish, they are also lazy, they have no children either, and their women-folk waste away all, or they themselves squander all by beer-drinking, or

[3] The lǫṭǫ, Randia dumetorum, Lam., and the kaṛke, Briedelia retusa, Sprengel.

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f. Hunting.

224 The great joy of us men is the hunt. From olden times we have continually been hunting, and in however great a danger we may fall, still we do not give up hunting. And if a person will not go, we despise such people and call them women. Our ancestors have fought tigers and bears with great courage; sometimes the tigers and bears have gained the upper hand, and sometimes the men, and so it is going on until the present day.

178 203 224 793 796 In former times they used to announce the hunt by sending a branch from village to village, by stages; but since our stay in Sikhar we notify the day at the Pata (the hook-swinging festival)[3]. As there is a village priest and a priest of the outskirts in the village, there is similarly a dihri (hunt-priest) for the hunt. There is one hunt-priest for every single country. He carries the branch round at the Pata; the people of the country then ask him: In connexion with what is your branch, Sir? He then tells them the name of the forest: In such and such a forest, on such and such a day, at such and such a place we shall meet. He also tells them where they will spend the night. When we come home, we men in the village tell each other the news, saying: At such and such a date they are

224 to hunt through such and such a forest or over such and such a hill. The men of the village then get their different hunting implements together, they string their bows, fix the iron arrow-heads and the blunt arrow-heads in the arrows, they grind the iron arrow-heads and make them sharp-pointed, they grind their battle-axes sharp and give them a handle; they put the spear-heads on the shafts, and the swords they polish bright. They tell the women to prepare dough-balls of Mahua for food, and they make them pound rice to have to take along with them. The village headman has to give five half-seers of rice and one small bundle of Mahua as hunt-bounty. This the hunting men eat, or if some poor men have nothing, they let them have a sufficiency of this. The village priest sacrifices five fowls for the sake of the hunt.

[782]

[534] When the fixed day is reached, a couple of men go at cock-crow in advance out to an open plain to bring the whole male village population together there; they also take kettle-drums and flutes and horns along with them; and until the village men have all come out, they beat the kettle-drums rat-a-tat, blow the flute harmoniously, and blow the horns tootingly, and they sing any amount of forest songs sweetly. When they have all assembled, they shout with one voice together; thereupon they go to the place where they are to meet. Here they eat their noon meal. One after the other the people of the country come and assemble there; the hunt-priest has been there from cock-crow.

224 787 Until the people of the country arrive, the hunt-priest makes a divination about good or bad happenings. If he gets anything bad in any direction, he calls the country people

[3] The Pata should be held on the last day of Cait, about the 15th of April; among the people living in the Santal Parganas it may be held any day during Baisak (middle of April to middle of May). The dihri has a sal-branch with as many leaves as there are days remaining before the hunt is to take place.

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together and summons the people of that locality. He asks them: From what villages of such and such a locality have you come? They then one after the other mention their villages to him. Thereupon he makes divination in oil for these different villages. If he gets proof for any village that a tiger will eat them, he tells them this. He says to them: Do make your arrangements, or go home. They answer him: Please, Sir, you make arrangements for us.

The hunt-priest then selects the men the tiger will eat. He removes the occult influence in their name by offering a fowl. At this time he makes an invocation: He greeted then, thou Day-spirit of the heaven, thou art spread like a mat, thou art covered up like a kiṇ[1], the four parts, the four worlds thou hast covered; now then a widow, a woman of ill omen has decreed, has ordained a death; she who has destined for destruction, has shut up for dying, may a tiger eat her eldest son. And these men who have been destined for destruction, have been shut up for dying, guide them out, follow them out from my forest, Father my Thakur.

Thereupon the hunt-priest sacrifices five fowls, one fowl he sacrifices to the hunt-priest bongas and four fowls to the bongas of the forest. After this he pricks himself and lets the blood run down on some rice, and this rice he offers to the bongas of the forest. He then cooks the flesh of the fowls together with rice. As many villages there are from which fowls have come, for all these he divides the hash, that is to say, of the sacrificed five fowls. Of the remaining fowls the hunt-priest sacrifices some in any place, where there may be a hindrance in the forest, making the country people stop and stand there. The hunt-priest will not let the country people pass along until he has made a sacrifice, in a place where there is a hindrance.

After all the men have had food, the hunt-priest tells them where water is to be found. But he himself does not eat until blood has been shed; only when the country people have shot an animal with an arrow and caused blood to drop, then only he may take food. When the hunt-priest performs a sacrifice they hobble him with a rope made of the off-stripped saplings of the Sal-tree, and with a hat of leaves they cover him from the top of his head to his eyes and blindfold him. The country people treat the hunt-priest in this way, in order that the animals may not see and not be able to run away. When the hunt-priest has finished the sacrifice, he rolls himself on the ground, and a couple of men press him down, and some of them pretend to cut him with a battle-axe with leaves. At this time they say: The forequarter, fellows, the forequarter, fellows! A big buffalo has fallen! Then he is loosened. In every place where the hunt-priest performs a sacrifice, they handle him in the same way. If, even after they have sacrificed in this way, tigers or bears eat any of the country-people, they scold him awfully; they brandish battle-axes and

[1] Pandanus odoratissimus, WEM.

[illegible] Ehe Hus. – Bodding.

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villages have passed an unrighteous judgement in connexion with some riceland, or in connexion with a bride and bridegroom; or: Me they have without any cause called a witch[8]; or: I have on account of this or that in the meantime forbidden so and so people to fetch water and touch the drinking vessels; or: As for me, the village people have without any cause or reason shut my door, — they make a thousand complaints, because the hunt-council is our High Court. There the Pargana, Dgs Mnjhi, and village headmen have no power to intimidate any one, the men of the country, small and big, judge, and there they utterly subdue the greedy, fat people, if they have in any case acted unjustly. Some greedy people do not go there at all out of shame or fear. If they have not gone there, the men of the country will next day seize them, and if they do not obey, the men of the country will next day go in crowds to their home, and if they find proofs of their injustice, they punish them so as to make them flinch. At the hunt judging they judge very righteously; they do not let any injustice pass at all. In the village the headman or the Pargana scold and intimidate us, as they take us to be of no account; but at the burnt forest they have no power to silence us; then they become slinking like the tail of a cowardly dog; for this reason we poor people have great trust in the judgement of the burnt forest[9].

Continuing to judge, dancing the dunger, singing forest songs, and blowing the flute they continue until dawn. They then prepare their morning meal and eat; thereupon the hunt-priest sacrifices the remaining fowls. Now they enter the other forest and turn back hunting. When, at noon or in the middle of the afternoon, they have finished hunting they disperse. Thereupon they start for their various villages, hunting as they pass along.

Formerly they were hunting up to five days, being continually out so long; but nowadays, what can be done, when there is no such big forest? Formerly when the hunters entered and passed through the street of any village, the girls of the village washed their feet, and the hunters gave these girls campa flowers[10], and they saluted each other. Thereupon the village people gave the hunters Mahua dough and water to eat and drink. Nowadays this custom of ours has been discontinued.

When the hunters come home, the respective household people wash their feet, and they salute each other, because they have come back saved from death; as they say among us: The danger for women is at childbirth; the danger for men is during hunt and chase; if you get through this, you will see ages. When they have washed their feet, they give them food. They eat; thereupon the hunters go to where there is water; here they gather, and when they have come together, they singe and cut up the killed animals. The one

[8] i. e., his wife or a daughter or a related woman living in his house; a man is not a witch. [9] The hunt-council is constantly referred to as "the burnt forest". Every year the Santals in the beginning of April set fire to the undergrowth and especially all the dead leaves lying on the ground. [10] Either a small bush, Ochna squarrosa, Roxb., or a large tree, Michelia champaca, L.

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The Jǫm sim bonga was not from the beginning; at the Jǫm sim festival they were offering only to the Sun bonga. They had, it is told, had a sacrifice to their Abge. When they had eaten and were going home, they forgot a battle-axe and left it there. When they remembered this on their way, one of them ran back to fetch it. To this man the Jǫm sim bonga revealed himself; he was picking up and eating what was lying scattered there. While he was eating the bonga was talking to himself: Oh, now I have felt pleased for the first time. Then seeing the man, he disappeared. The man brought the battle-axe, but he did not tell them of the bonga that had revealed himself. After this they got a good deal of fever, so that they were near dying. Then they had some divination made for them. The ojhas told them: Some bonga or other is revealing himself to you. Then the man who had fetched the battle-axe remembered what had happened to him, saying: Really I saw him when I was fetching the forgotten battle-axe. I heard him say: Now I have felt pleased for the first time. Therefore they called this bonga Ahaṅ. The ojhas said to them: This bonga says: Offer to me at the Jǫm sim festival. From that time the Santals worship him.

c. Worship and festivals.

The Sowing fowl is the first offering of the year[8]. In the month of Asaṛ (middle of June to middle of July) we eat the sowing fowls, in the name of sowing and scattering the seed. Every house has to give one fowl. The village priest offers these in the sacred grove. He offers one fowl to each, to Maraṅ buru, Jaher era, Mǫṛǫko, Gosāe era, Pargana, and Maṅjhi haṛam. He offers one black fowl to the bonga of the surrounding boundary. The remaining fowls he offers to the bongas along the boundaries; and if there are fowls left, they kill them wringing their necks. They do not offer them in a lump, but each separately. They make an invocation, as follows: Be greeted then, Father my Ṭhakur, Jaher era (or Maraṅ buru, and so on), here then in the name of the Sowing fowl this is given to thee, handed to thee; we shall sow in one place, in twelve places may it shoot up in tufts, may they blow and bring, flood and bring rainy season rain, burning rain; into this village, this hamlet do ye not let suffering and sin, disease and illness, stomach-ache or headache enter, penetrate; with golden slings, with golden shoulder-yokes ye will carry it away on your shoulders, ye will carry it away with shoulder-yokes to another side, another boundary, Father my Ṭhakur. Widows, women of ill omen, a torn leaf, a folded leaf they will select for destruction, will doom; so then do not ye let them get good omens, favourable signs; then one day, half-a-day they will pry, stand on tiptoe, do not let any spell be thrown, any hurt be done, the calf-mothers, the goat-mothers may they wander about, walk about satisfactorily, the Siṅ forest, the Man forest, the half-grown dogs may ye press down, cover up, Lord, Father, my Ṭhakur.

[8] The Sowing fowl, the fowls sacrificed in connexion with the sowing of paddy.

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Sohrae[11] is our great festival. We have this in the month of Pus (middle of December to middle of January), when we have reaped and threshed the paddy. As we have got fresh crops, we also fill our bonges; and our relatives we also entertain, as we have food and drink. Small and big, poor widows included, all of us then feast. 796

The village headman gathers the village people to have a council. Then they fix the time for the Sohrae. The village headman now gives the Goḍet an order: Do collect the beer-contributions and tell them in every house that they are to brew beer; after so and so many days we shall bathe for the Sohrae. In every house they now brew beer, and they invite their respective relatives to come. On the fixed day sisters and daughters, sisters' children and male relatives, all come together. In the evening of the day before they bathe the Goḍet takes three fowls and brings them to the village priest, two white ones and one speckled. The village priest binds them, and this night he himself observes religious abstinence, that is to say, he lies on the ground on a mat. When it becomes dawn, the Goḍet takes one fowl and half-a-seer rice together with salt and turmeric in every house. Having had her bath the wife of the village priest comes and pounds meal for the priest. About the middle of the forenoon (ca. 9 o'clock) the village priest goes out to the water's edge to sacrifice. The Goḍet goes along with the priest, taking the fowls collected in the village with him; a couple of the men of the village also go along.

After having bathed and come up from the water the village priest makes a magic square, plastering a long spot with cow-dung, in the direction of North and South. Along the magic square he puts small handfuls of rice in many places; thereupon he makes marks of sindur near the small heaps of rice, three marks at each heap. Thereupon he sprinkles water on the speckled one of the fowls that were taken the first day, and applies sindur to its head, and thereupon sindur to its wings and legs. Next he puts an egg down on the small heaps of rice, marking it with sindur; and letting the fowl eat from the rice, he makes an invocation: He greeted then, Jaher era, Father my Ṭhakur, in the name of the Sohrae this is given to thee, handed to thee; with pleasure and delight mayest thou receive, mayest thou accept this; this mayest thou be pleased with, mayest thou be agreeable to; we are inexperienced girls, inexperienced boys, we do not know and recognize; in the plastering, in the cleaning with cow-dung, in the observances, in the religious abstinence, where anything may have been forgotten, been indifferently done, we do not know, do not recognize it; may ye bear it, suffer it. In former times, in some manner or other, our ancestors of old, in silk clothes, in women's sindur-red attire, received ye, met ye, Father my Ṭhakur. In the village, in the settlement do not let stomach-ache, headache enter, do not let it intrude; relatives, persons of our sept, from the other side of the big river, from the other side of the stream we have invited, we have notified sister's sons and daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, they will dance and enjoy themselves, may there 796 539 782

[11] See Dictionary s. v.

[12] Only Ets. Mss. – Bodding.

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796 782 539 may water from the eaves fall down on it, may mushrooms spring up, your owner, your watchman, on the other side of the big river, on the other side of the stream, co-parents-in-law, their near relatives, may they eat, may they drink; hear it you, listen you, the Turks' measure of capacity[17], awfully large, your owner, your watchman with his arrow, his battle-axe may he dig and smite, pierce and smite.

Take it, you Sugi, through you, Sugi, may there become one hundred Sugis, by carrying them on your hip, by bearing them, guiding them, following them up here, may you fill this cow-shed, this place of omen, fill it to overflow, your owner, your watchman on the other side of the big river, on the other side of the stream, co-parents-in-law, their near relatives, may they eat, may they drink, hear it you, listen you, the Turks' measure of capacity, awfully large, your owner, your watchman with his arrow, his battle-axe may he dig and smite, may he pierce and smite.

At the same time when they make this invocation they strew out the dhubi grass and the sun-dried paddy and rice towards the cattle-shed and the cows. Then they sing[18]:

Having taken sun-dried rice in the hand,
Having arranged the betel nut, a bunch,
Come along, so and so goddess, at the proper time
To bless waving over the cows.

More than once waving and blessing
To wave and bless twice is great.
This happened on the big bullock
Alone.

Wherefore are you crying, bullock?
Wherefore are you worrying, bullock?
I shall give you, my son,
Excellent betelnut.

Slowly he will go, slowly he will go,
The young bullock;
Afterwards I shall apply sindur.

796 539 In this way the girls perform the waving ceremony in house after house and continue singing at every cattle-shed. In the village street they sing in another way:

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[17] The translation is literal; no Santal has been able to explain to the writer what is really meant. [18] In corrupt Bihari.

796 the rice. At that time they make the following invocation: Be greeted then, white-haired
[782] one, Father my Ṭhạkur, in the name of the Sohrae I am giving ye, handing to ye rotten
[539] food, rotten cooked rice, with this may ye be pleased, be agreeable. On the other side of the big river, on the other side of the stream, relatives, people of our own sept, daughters, sisters we have invited, we have notified; what remains, what is left by ye, they will eat, take into their mouth; do not let stomach-ache, headache be created, be formed, Father my Ṭhạkur. They make some further long invocations. Thereupon they all eat and drink.

[539] They sing:

Small, small fowls and pigs,
Numerous are your relatives;
I shall prepare the rice, the curry,
As for me, Father, I will certainly not serve it out.

When they have eaten, they paint s t n a k̆ leaves with wetted flour in the door of the cattle-shed, that it may look nice, and on the posts of the cattle-shed they splash flour-water and smear sindur; the yokes and the bar-posts they also treat in the same way. The married men and women go from house to house and drink beer and sing, and the young men and girls dance the whole night along in the village street.

[539] When married men and women go to an other house to drink beer, they sing, as they go:

This year, Father, make my cloth bordered,
Next year, Father, make my cloth with white and red stripes.
The village headmen of the Jhạriạ pạṭi country
Are coming on a visit.

[539] In the house where they go in, the people of this house meet them singing:

Please, sit down,
Please, stand;
Food and drink, my companion, we have none,
To meet and see each other, my companion, is a bewitching courtesy.

He made bad seasons, my companion,
He made good seasons;
Seed and seed-grain, my companion, we did not get;
All my children have become utter paupers.

Next day dawns. Then they drum the kettle-drum at the village headman's house, in order that the people may come together. The leading men of the village assemble. When they have gathered, the village headman asks them: How is it, are we, poor people, all

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Some say the old man is dead;
Some say he is alive.
Exorcise him slowly, sitting,
Smearing red earth on him.
The old man is fidgeting,
The old man is fidgeting.

The women do their separate work, clean the ground with cow-dung, make flour, and so on; and after having finished dancing the young men go about and beg for fun's sake. Once they beat the brushwood fences from one end of the village street to the other end, and when they reach the house of the Goḍet, they shut the Goḍet in, closing the door to the village street. The Goḍet then gives them one earthenware pot with beer. Then they open (the door) for him. Thereupon they continue beating right up to the end of the village street. There at the end they make different "dancers" of straw; when they have made these ready, they take them to the house of the village headman. Here they make them dance, and the headman gives them rice. In this way they beg from house to house. When they have done begging, they give what they have begged together in charge in the house of the Jog Mãjhi. Now all the men go to bathe, taking yokes, battle-axes, and knives along with them. They have their bath and come back. [43]

Thereupon they sacrifice fowls and pigs in every house. They sacrifice them to Marañ buru and to the house-bongas; to the ancestors they fell them. With flour they make the magic squares, two; in the middle of each they put down a small heap of rice and they make five marks of sindur, and on the animal to be sacrificed they sprinkle water and smear sindur on it, on its head, shoulder, and hoofs. Thereupon they let it feed on the rice in the magic square, and they make an invocation: Be greeted then, Marañ buru, Father my Ṭhakur, now then, in the name of the Sohrae, I am giving thee, handing to thee offerings, sacrifices; with this mayest thou be pleased, be agreeable; with pleasure, with delight thou wilt receive it, accept it, thou wilt fondle it, consider it great; formerly the ancestors of old received ye, met ye in silk clothes, in sindur-red women's attire; we are inexperienced girls, inexperienced boys, we do not know, do not recognize; in the plastering, in the cleaning with cow-dung, in the observances, in the religious abstinences, some may have been forgotten, been indifferently done; may ye bear it, may ye suffer it all, Father my Ṭhakur. Thereupon they make further invocations; but these I have quoted formerly. They make the same kind of invocation to the house-bongs. And letting the fowls feed on rice on a small leaf-plate they fell them, offering them to the ancestors, and they pour beer on the ground as a libation to Marañ buru and the ancestors. [782] [539]

Having finished the sacrifices they prepare rice and curry. They cook separately the flesh of the animals offered to the ancestors. This they throw down to them together with

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The priest is in the court-yard, girls,
The reddish white horse;
The priest is in the place outside, girls,
The reddish companion mare.

Moving up and down, moving up and down, girls,
Is the reddish white horse;
Swaying, swaying, girls,
Is the reddish companion mare.

Bind on him the bells, girls,
On the reddish white horse;
Tie on to her the jingle-belt, girls,
On the reddish companion mare.

The dancing ones dance, and the beer-drinkers drink beer. Until sunset they dance in the house of the priest singing Flower-festival songs; and when the sun has set, they go to outside the house of the village headman and dance lagre in the village street. When they have finished dancing, they go to their respective homes to lie down and sleep.

The next day the priest of the outskirts takes the Goḍet along with him and goes to the forest. Here he pricks himself and offers the blood to the Pargana bongs and the others. At all offerings he acts in the same way.

Offering to the Abge we have every year, sometimes in Aghâṛ (middle of November to middle of December), sometimes in Asaṛ (middle of June to middle of July), there is nothing fixed. To the Abge bongs we sometimes give fowls, sometimes pigs, and sometimes rams. Marak buru and the others with him are bongas common for all, but the Abge bonga belongs to each one separately. The Abge bongas watch over their respective families, in order that no fever or pain, no epidemics, no witchcraft, and no deaths or calamities shall befall them. Santals say, it is told, that if witch women get hold of the Abge bongas, then the members of the family have no possibility of being saved; they will die; therefore they exert themselves to keep their Abge bongs satisfied. And if they make vows to them at times of danger, they will stand up and save them. When they sacrifice to the Abge, only brothers invite each other and eat, the men only; they do not give the women anything. In the open field, near a white-ant hill they perform the sacrifice to the Abge bongs; the invocation is not different, it is the same at all sacrifices.

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Also to the boundary bongas they make sacrifices every year, that is, those who plough in the places where the bongas are. The boundary bongas are very jealous; if they are not kept satisfied, they kill awfully; in a moment they make snakes appear; they make tigers eat you, or they cause disease to come suddenly; therefore we fear them very much,

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776 and we are quick to sacrifice to them. We give them fowls twice every year, at rice planting and harvesting. When we sacrifice to them, there is no magic square, there is
782 no sindur either, nor is there any religious abstinence, and the invocation is only a few words; we say to them: Beware then, so and so's Boundary bonga, look here, I am giving thee, handing thee in the name of harvesting (or planting); may there be no sudden fear, no sudden alarm. Except women all eat the sacrifice. People say, it is told, that if only you of the family eat, or if you take anything home, then the boundary bongas will enter the house and exterminate the whole family of that house.

177 These are our real annual festivals and offerings. On the last day of the month of Aghâr we have a kind of festival, called sahar luṇḍal[31]: we press cakes and eat
776 them; but we make no sacrifices. From the Dekos we have from time to time taken over many festivals; but among these there is only one festival that we, the whole village celebrate, viz., the Karam[32]. At that time we offer belaoṅja flowers[33], sun-dried paddy, dhubi grass, oil, and sindur to Kạrmu and Dhạrmu, and on the karam branch we put, as a screen, a piece of cloth two cubits long. At other festivals taken from the Dekos only the man who celebrates it, worships, and we go to look at it; we do not worship. At the Durga festival such people offer to Durga, at the Kali festival they offer to Kali, at the Monsa festival they offer to Monsa, at the Chata festival they offer to the Chata bonga, at the Pata festival they offer to Mahadeb, and at the Jatra festival they offer to Bạnsiṅ, the Jatra bonga. But as these festivals do not belong to us, Santals do not act rightly offering to the bongas of other races. On account of this our bongas are angry with us; it becomes like the state of having a wife and a co-wife, we are not making anybody satisfied. We have got much confusion in connexion with the bongas. You Europeans have only one bonga; you are very fortunate, because you worship the Ṭhạkur, who has made us.

776 To the Jọm sim we do not sacrifice every year, only now and then. To the Siṅ (sun or day) bonga we offer one goat, and to the Jọm sim bonga we offer one goat or a ram on
782 that occasion. The invocation is not different; only at the end we say to the Siṅ bonga: We are not able to do this every year, do not therefore take offence, be displeased.

776 Our ancestors of old have left us a word, viz.: Once in your life, somehow or other, do
753 sacrifice to the Siṅ bonga, even when you are poor, and when you have the means, do sacrifice to him every fifth or sixth year, otherwise he will not call you good in the next world. In the primeval age they were offering only to the Siṅ bonga; the Jọm sim bonga they have added afterwards. Since we have got venereal disease from the Dekos, we make vows to the Siṅ bonga to be cured from it; this they call "pair offering". They say, it

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[31] The meaning of this expression is uncertain; sahar is regularly used about dung, especially cow-dung, and luṇḍạ (or luṇḍạl) about rubbing, plastering with cow-dung. One might therefore be tempted to take it as meaning renovation after the ravages of the rainy season. [32] See Dictionary s. v. [33] Cæsulia axillaris, Roxb.

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is told, that Sita made a vow to get a venereal disease when Rabon carried her away to the Lanka (Ceylon) fortress. At that time, it is told, the Sin bonga caused Sita to get a venereal disease, because she made a vow to him; thereby Sita's honour remained unviolated.

The Mañ Mõṛẽ sacrifice occurs only now and then, when all the people of a village make a vow on account of some great calamity. And when a rumour comes from the country that the Mõṛẽko Turuiko have become sulky, then also they have a Mañ Mõṛẽ sacrifice. They sacrifice goats and fowls to all the bongas of the village. Except the wife of the village priest no woman gets cooked rice with curry of the flesh of the sacrificed animals and birds; all the men get it. They perform the Mañ Mõṛẽ sacrifice in the sacred grove. The young men and girls dance the whole night, singing Flower-festival songs.

The Kuṭam ḍañgra (ox felling) sacrifice is only one man's business; but all the village people eat the flesh and cooked rice. The man who celebrates this fells one ox in the name of the ancestors; he beheads one ox in the name of the house bonga, and also in the name of Marañ buru he beheads one ox. The ox that is felled he fells at the foot of an ainañ tree, after first having made it eat from rice on a leaf-plate; and the two other bullocks he makes eat from small heaps of rice, after having made a magic square with flour at the foot of a Sal tree; thereupon he beheads them.

The Kuṭam ḍañgra sacrifice is performed when they have the Jom nim, or some vow has been made. Since we have come under the feet of the Dekos, we have the Kuṭam ḍañgra sacrifice at night, because the Deko landowners impose heavy fines if they get to know of it[24]. The meat of the ox that is sacrificed in the name of the house bonga, that is to say, the meat of the side on which it falls down, and the head, only the people of the family eat, otherwise the people of the whole village all eat. The village headman and his deputy and the Goḍet get one thigh, viz., of the felled ox as their share. The Parnaik gets the part of the thigh highest up, the headman gets the middle and the Goḍet the lower part. They take out a neck part for the village council. This they call the neck part of the girls. Outside in the field they eat a hash made only of the head and the liver and lungs. The meat the people of the different houses make into equal portions and take home; the whole family eat it.

[24] The landlords being Hindus object to bullocks and especially cows being killed.

796 [782] [539] be no spells, no enchantments, no loss, no waste, no quarrel, no dispute, may they dance with joy, enjoy themselves, Lord Father, my Thakur.

Thereupon he sacrifices the speckled fowl. In the same way he sacrifices to all the bongas. Having cooked the fowls with rice into a hash, all the men of the village eat them. And the collected beer they drink there. All the people of the village, poor and others, then ask each other: Well, how is it? Perhaps some among us have a fever or are ill? If this is the case, we must let each other know. The village men then answer: We are well, Father headman, by your grace. The village headman then says: By the grace of Thakur we shall all get what is good. As we see, we have brought the Sohrae festival, the great Elder Sister has arrived. For five days and five nights dance and enjoy yourselves, brothers and sisters; let there be no disputes, no quarrels, no covetousness, no greed; if there is any covetousness and greed, look out well, also the fenced vegetables you may pluck, but not what is climbing on poles, nor what is shrivelled up, pluck what is unripe; and the flowers that they have fixed with latha, have tied with thread, do not commit the sin of plucking these flowers for us, Sirs. The village men then answer: With twelve balls of cotton we are shutting our ears up; then whatever there may be, small or big, we shall not see or listen to it[12]. Thereupon they sing[13]:

[539]

Who created	Thakur created	Tirmuji created
The wide earth?	The wide world.	Kanu the Goala.
Who created	Thakur created	Towards the East he drove
The cattle, you there?	The cattle, you there.	The cattle, you there.
Who created	Thakur created	Towards the East he drove
The cattle?	The cattle.	The cattle.

Where, young man, did you lose	On the road I lost
The flute at your waist?	The flute at my waist.
Where, young man, did you lose	At the place of worship I lost
The cattle, you there?	The cattle, you there.
Where, young man, did you lose	At the place of worship I lost
The cattle?	The cattle.

Thereupon they call the cattle-herd boys: Come with them, fellows, bring the cattle, we shall let them trample on the magic square and blot it out. They then drive the cattle near to the magic square. The village priest now asks for all the sticks of the cattle-herds;

[834]

[12] The expressions used all refer to women; they must not touch those who are too young or too old, and not married ones. It is shameless. [13] In a kind of Sthati.

he puts them down at the magic square; he applies sindur to every single stick of theirs. 796
Thereupon they drive the cattle near to the magic square.

Any cow[14], who treads on or smells at the egg put down there, this cow they catch and, washing her legs, they anoint her horns with oil, and apply sindur to her horns. The herd of this cow they lift up and place him on some one's shoulder, and bring him to the village headman and put him down there. The boy bows to the headman and after him to all the elderly men there.

Now they go home, drumming the dancing-drum as they go along. They enter the house of the village priest, who gives them beer. After they have drunk this, they proceed to the house of the village headman, who also gives them beer. At this time the village headman says to the Jog Maṅjhi and the Jog Paranik: So long as the festival lasts, the young men and girls are in your charge, and the festival is also in your charge. If you let the village street become deserted, we shall fine both of you. Thereupon they separate. They take food and drink beer in their respective houses.

It is evening. The elderly men and women go to bed, and the young men bless[15] the cattle. Standing at the door of the cow-shed they drum the dancing drum and sing[16]: [539]

> The cows have gone to the Siribandha forest,
> The buffalo-cows are grazing on the other side of the Ganges.
>
> The cows come home when the sun sets,
> The buffalo-cows come home, after having grazed, at midnight.
>
> On what horn is it to get oil and sindur?
> Where on its back is grass and paddy to be strewed on it?

In this way they sing, drum, and blow the flute at every house exceedingly, and all along the village street they shout indecently. Although they hear this in every house, they do not listen to it.

After these the girls perform the waving ceremony over the cattle. They also commence at the house of the village headman. They bring with them sun-dried rice, and sun-dried paddy, mixed together, dhubi grass and a lighted lamp. They make an invocation: Take it, you reddish one, through you, reddish one, may there become one hundred reddish [782] ones, by your guiding them, following them, fill this cattle shed, this place of omen, fill [539] it to overflow; may you earn, may you produce, to the backside of the house, to its eaves;

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[14] The word used may also mean any place of cattle, not necessarily a cow. [15] The word translated "bless" [192] is ordinarily used about "awaken"; the object of the proceedings is to cause the cattle to become fruitful and effective. [16] In a kind of Bihari.

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e. Becoming unfitted for use.

Becoming unfitted for use happens in two ways. One way is this: When somebody sets castrated animals aside for the Jom sim, and before they sacrifice them some venerable old man of their sept dies, then these castrated animals become unfit for being sacrificed; these castrated animals are not sacrificed, they only slaughter them.

The other is in connexion with the rights of daughters or sisters. When a man separates his own sons, or brothers set up separate households, sisters get one cow each, when their father is living; when the father dies without having given a cow to his daughters or sisters, and these girls afterwards ask for this right of theirs from their brothers, then the council people say: Why did you not ask for it while your father was living? Now your right has been cancelled; but the women who follow up their right say: Don't, Fathers, cancel my right; the man is dead; quite so, judgement has not died; this really is, that judgement has been overthrown.

And concerning any rights in connexion with marriage they say: Don't, Fathers, cancel my right; this is my right.

f. The sum total of the law of the rights of women.

When a man makes separate establishments for his sons, then he also gives to each of his daughters one cow or calf, or a sheep or a goat. When he gives this to married ones or to spinsters, he gives the same to all. And in this right of theirs, or, if their goats or sheep multiply, in this increase the brothers of a husband of theirs have no right, because the father of the girls has given them this of his own accord. When he made separate establishments for his sons, at that time the girl received them in the presence of her brothers, from her own father. At this very time the matter of father and brothers has been finally settled. But if sons or daughters of her brother herd them, they get wages. And if they multiply in the house of her husband, then the nephews or nieces of the girl will herd them. These she will also in the same way give wages, and if the two wish so, they may give a heifer or a bull calf to the children on both sides. But on both sides they have no right to get this.

If there are no cattle, then they will give to each one brass-cup. When selling this brass-cup they buy a calf or a goat for the money they get thereby, and when these multiply, in the same way the heirs on both sides have no right to get any of these either. A pig, or a goat, a sheep, a cow the woman herself may sell, and she will keep the money, and she may also use the money for her clothes and apparel. Such people have now and then, by giving a bullock or a cow with calf as salami, acquired rice and other land in a separate place, and somewhere they have even founded a village after having given salami. Formerly when the Paharias were landlords in this country, they very much appreciated pigs or castrated goats. They were great drunkards; they were eating anything along with liquor. They were easily and quickly beguiled by pigs and castrated goats.

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calling "Thàkur Jiu' as "Dhòròm". Nabin Mañjhi, Headman of Chamardahani, Muruda, explained that Dhòròm is the Creator of the world according to Santal belief. Being asked if the deity is worshipped at present by the Santals, he replied that Dhòròm is invoked during all marriage ceremonies with offerings of pure water and nothing else. Closely questioned as to whether the god had any shape or form, he answered that he had none and was 'nirakar' (*formless*). Secondly, the Santals of Muruda led by Nabin Mañjhi gave us some additional information as to how the first parents prepared the first drink. This was what they did. Gòròm baba asked them to grind grass-seeds and later directed them to bring the water from a fountain called *tatijhari*, by drinking which the monkeys became drunk as it washed the roots of a plant named *ràmu ran*.[1] [A plant of the name exists in Mayurbhanj and is extensively used in the preparation of hàṇḍia (*rice-beer*)]. Then these two substances were mixed together to make the drink of the first parents. Thirdly, we have seen in the foregoing account that the Santals, while at Hihiri Pipiri were divided into seven clans and it is only after their migration from Sasan beda that they

1. Ràmu—The ferment used in the manufacture of rice-beer, Ran—drug (Dr. Campbell).

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273 drinks, and we remember how even Gandhiji in his prohibition campaign has excluded the aboriginal from his programme. "Hàṇḍia" (rice-beer) is a [782 594] compulsory offering to some of their gods and spirits and on social rounds it is customary with the Santal to present pots of beer. The *modus operandi* of the preparation was thus explained to us by a comely Santal woman selling beer under a banyan tree. She said that sun-dried rice is first ground and mixed with a powdered root, called "ràṇu" in Santali (Oriya, *mulika*). The whole mass is then shaped into little balls. Next, rice is boiled and spread out to dry and the balls are then powdered and mixed thoroughly with the rice. The next stage requires the mixture thus obtained to be kept in large earthen pots, (See illustration) covered with "sal"-leaves for three or four days together, in course of which the rice is well fermented. The pots beside the woman contained this mixture and she, with a great deal of gusto, showed us how the fluid of the rice-beer trickled down a bamboo sieve (Santali, "chala"), being pressed by the hand with a handful of fibres (Santali, "pala") to complete the process. She, a

Fermented rice

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other tribes resident in the areas. It is a very difficult but fascinating task to find out which of them are typically Santal and which borrowed, as culture-loans from the neighbouring tribes, either Muṇḍà or hinduised Aboriginals.

This material aspect of Santal life is indissolubly linked up with its religious and clan features. We shall see in the forthcoming pages how the Santals invoke their gods to bless them with bumper-crops, how they seek protection for their hunting-dogs and cattle from the attack of wild animals by prayers to the deities. Thus the communal worship of the tribe has for its object the securing of good luck and avoiding bad luck for the tribe as its material background.

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brothers. So they wanted to "Sòle" (mix) it with rice. And as they mixed, they took another "paris" (sub-clan), namely Sòle Màrṇḍi.

(v) Khandajaha or Khandajagao Màrṇḍi:—They place the weapon (khanda) before the deity while engaged in Jòm Sim puja or propitiating the household deity, "Oṛak' Boṅga."

(vi) Ruth Màrṇḍi:—These Màrṇḍis would not cut or otherwise use the *ruth* tree (*Oriya Panjam*).[1]

(vii) Merachakha Màrṇḍi:—They are so named because they ate first the rice of hàṇḍia (rice-beer). "Mera" means rice, and "chakha" to eat.

(viii) Tarap Màrṇḍi:—Tarap is a tree, called in Oriya, "Charkuli." It is reported that these Màrṇḍis do not cut this tree or eat on its leaves. Others told us that pork is tabooed to this sub-clan and yet others, that they cannot take "mòhua" wine inside their houses according to customary prohibition.

(ix) Sade Màrṇḍi:—It was explained to us that "Sade" means a "hotchpotch of rice and pulse" in Mayurbhanj, and the members of this sub-clan

1. There is no mention of "ruth" in Campbell's dictionary. Most probably it is the same as *Rot*, a common forest tree, Ougenia Dalbergioides Bl. which probably gives the name to Rot Màrṇḍis.

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[782] offer this dish to the deity during their Jòm-sim puja.[1]

6. *Sòrèn*

[701] The Santal traditions say that the Sòrèns in mythical times were the fighting class, (Sòrèn Sipahi) equivalent to the Kshatriyas, and supplied the warriors. We come across such expressions as Sòrèn Sipahi in Santal folk-tales. Their totem is the constellation Pleiades. The sub-clans, named below, were noticed in Mayurbhanj.

(i) Man Sòrèn:—They have for their totem "Bhàuṇṭià Jel," a species of deer.

(ii) Nij Sòrèn:—The general totem of the clan viz. the constellation of Pleiades, remains to be the object of their adoration.

(iii) Sidup' Sòrèn:—*Sidup'* means opposite. It was explained that the members of this sub-clan place in the door-way of their cattle-sheds the sheaves of paddy with their corn downwards during the "Sohrae", the Santal Harvest Home. The sub-clan cannot touch these corn, and these must be taken away by others. It was also gathered that during their Jòm sim puja, they prepare a weapon called "bàṇṛsi hapa," (Bàṇṛsi = a fish hook, Hapa =

1. This is perhaps a Mayurbhanj edition of the Sada Màṛṇḍi, mentioned by Campbell. The word 'Sade' in his dictionary means 'sound'.

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4. Maternal uncle

In ceremonial functions, the maternal uncle takes the place of the guardian of the house, if the father or the brothers be dead. Thus the father stands first, next the paternal uncle, the maternal uncle holds the third place. The maternal uncle gets a marriage-present called *mama pòn* (bride-price, to be paid to the maternal uncle in case the father is not living).

5. Son-in-law

During certain *pujas*, the son-in-law of the family sacrifices goats, and during marriages he holds the basket of the bride (*dàuṛà*).[1]

As regards the mutual behaviour of relations, the Santals do not very much differ from the Hindus. Thus the mother is respected just according to Hindu ideologies. The brothers have friendly and fraternal feelings, and sisters are affectionately treated. The wife respects her husband like her lord. They have a folk-song which will illustrate the point further :—

Niṅgàñ nàpuñ sàri cando barabàri
Gateñ tuluc' tòkòe barabarik';

1. Bàhu dàuṛà = A specially large basket in which a bride is raised shoulder high at the time the bride-groom applies the red-paint (sindur) to her forehead, Dr. Campbell's Dictionary, p. 139.

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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wit and sometimes his force, to control the tipsy folk.

(iv) *Godet*:—He is a sort of an usher and bearer-in-general at the beck and call of the headman and his assistants, holding like them rent-free lands as the privilege of his office.

(v) *Naeke* and *Cudam Naeke*: —Added to the fore-going, the ecclesiastical functions of the tribe are exercised by the *Naeke* (village-priest) and his assistant, whose special function is to propitiate the hill-spirits.

(2) Inter-village organization:—

The rural units, on their turn, are federated into a number of larger groups, each under the supervision (as we saw in Mayurbhanj) of a Desh-Pròdhan, whose special function, we shall soon notice.

On the top of this, these federal units are co-ordinated under the superintendence of a Santal over-chief, called *Pargana* having a varying area of the country under his jurisdiction, over which according to immemorial custom, he is the supreme head.

The special function of these tribal offices will be explained in detail in course of this chapter; and it is time that we should deal with the village assembly, a wonderful relic of ancient India embedded in the Santal tribal jurisprudence, serving

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not taken back to the tribal fold even on undergoing a ceremony of expiation.

The *modus operandi* of the restoration to the tribe can be thus described:—

The outcaste, as the most essential preliminary, first corrects himself thoroughly and then gives up what the society objected to. Next, he provides for the necessary fines and incidental costs of the ceremony of purification. Thus equipped, he informs the village elders; and on a fixed date the tribe assembles at the cross-road of the village. The offender looks very repentant, folds his hands in a mood of supplication. He bathes and carries water in a pitcher with five holes. Thereafter, a propitiatory ceremony is performed in honour of *Dhòròm* (*Siñ Boṅga*) and *Maraṅ Burn* who are invoked by an *Obòr Murmu*. An uncastrated goat is offered to the deity. The offending man and woman pay a fine of Re. 1·4 ans. each and the sum is divided amongst the village elders. The cloths of the outcasted man and woman are then taken round the *hat* (market) to the *Jòl-ghat* (bathing place) by some, and for this they are paid a annas each as fine by the guilty couple. Now, the people assembled rinse their mouths with water from the pitcher and drink *hàṇḍia* (rice-beer). The pitcher and cloths are then thrown into water amidst cries of *haribol* by the tribe. [782]

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684 All this time a tribal feast is in preparation at the cost of the offender at his house. The tribe assembles there. The outcaste washes the feet of the village elders, and thereafter serves the food personally to the tribe assembled. After the feast, the "Mòṇṛèn hòṛ" (the village elders) address the couple saying, "Henceforth you are parted. But should you unite again, you will be fined Rs. 25 each and driven out of the country." They then dig a hole and bury cowdung there or they may simply deposit some cow-dung on the place of the feast. In conclusion, the village-priest offers three fowls to the gods *Iabèr era*, "Mòntènko" and *Maraṅ Buru* so that they may purify the village from the sin committed by the guilty couple, now formally divorced.

[782] [793] [783]

Conclusion

181 619 783 784 The tribal psychology behind these proceedings is not very difficult to be understood. The Santals, like other *Muṇḍà* tribes, consider their tribal solidarity and strength to be their first concern. In the preservation of this tribal entity from conscious or unconscious pollution, they are fired by a primitive fanaticism and they take all measures whereby, they think, they can purify the tribe as a whole, as intrigues beyond the permitted degrees and unions with foreigners serve as the medium of supernatural

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CHAPTER VII

FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

121 If at any moment mankind has thought and felt that there must be "more things in heaven and earth" than dreamt of by one's philosophy, it is at the cross roads of life, such as births, marriages and deaths. Whence comes this life, by what ceremonials will the married couple's life progress to their mutual well-being and, as members of the big human society, by what processes can we on earth ensure the peace, if not the happiness, of the departed spirit? These are questions that have deeply affected human thought, civilized or uncivilized. It is to tackle these problems that the Santals have recourse to elaborate ceremonials, to bring luck to them, and to propitiate their gods and goddesses, so that the malevolent powers may be shorn of their malign influence and the benevolent may protect them.

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In the next few pages, we propose to deal with the ceremonies as observed by the Santals to ward off unknown dangers, and to feel at ease that something has been done to propitiate the deities.

844 *Birth*

When a baby is coming to a Santal family, no new shed is erected as a lying-in room, but any

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843 *Murài arak'* (an edible leaf, the radish, *Raphanus sativus*, Linn.), and garlic. The members of the family have no particular food-prohibition during this period.

844 783 184 In the Santal Parganas, the house and village become religiously unclean. No festivals or sacrifices are held in the village nor anybody dines in the house of child-birth till after purification, three or five days after, by the *chàṭiar* ceremony.

Narta (Name-giving Ceremony)

553 184 The usual Santal custom is to observe the name-giving ceremony between the third and fifth day after birth. But in Mayurbhanj, some observe it within one year, the date being fixed by the head of the family; while there are others, who may delay it up to the tenth year.

553 574 431 On the date of the ceremony being announced, friends and relatives of the family are invited. They arrive on the day fixed, with presents of rice, cloth, *hàṇḍia* (rice-beer), necklaces of beads (*mala*) and *doṛa* (string worn round the waist, pronounced *dara* by Mayurbhanj Santals) for the new-born child. Now the midwife, who delivered the child, sits with the baby facing east, and with a leaf-cup in front, containing turmeric paste, *mohua* oil and water.

553 782 887 An old man of the village offers the rice-beer presented by others and mixed with the family

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stock, to the chief presiding deity, *Marañ Buru*, and ancestor-spirits of the family, uttering suitable incantations so that the baby may prosper in life and have no diseases.

The child, if a male one, now receives his name after his grand-father; and if a female, after her grand-mother on the paternal side. Now follows a general drink of rice-beer and a tribal dinner. The midwife, who generally receives a fee of eight annas if the child is a female one, and ten annas and a *baru* (brass-plate) if a male, will now, on her part, invoke *Marañ Buru* and the dead ancestors of the father of the child at the village bathing-ghat, throw the leaf-cup in water, bathe and return home.[1]

Between the third and the fourth year, children of both sexes have their ears bored by their grand-mothers or elderly female relatives by means of a brass-needle. It is a quiet domestic ceremony and no invitations are issued outside.

Caco-Chatiar

The second critical period in the life of the Santal is sought to be guarded by a purificatory ritual called Caco-chatiar. This ceremony may be observed any time before marriage and is in effect, the admission

1 The midwife's fee for the next male child is 8 ans. and 6 ans. for a female.

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764 thrice and placed on it. A fowl is sacrificed by
[782] means of a twig of a *mòhua* tree passed through its
[824] eyes, and hung on one of the posts round the pyre.[1] Three *mòhua*-twigs are then placed by any one of the village, one on the breast, one on the navel and the third on the waist of the dead body. His teeth are brushed with a tooth-stick of *sal*-wood, and some lime and tobacco applied to the mouth. And after all these preliminaries, the son of the deceased sets fire to the body, by lighting the straw of the thatch taken from the house of the deceased. The members of the tribe present throw some fuel each on the pile on fire as their ceremonial duty on behalf of the clan. In case, the deceased has no son, the right of applying fire descends in this order, (1) father (2) brother (3) agnates (4) men of the clan. The
[562] wife can never apply fire, as she never accompanies the funeral.

764 Now, as the body is half-burnt, two men are
782 deputed to the house of the deceased to gather some
824 *sal* tooth-sticks, some leaves of *kaima* tree, some roots of *bena* plant (a common grass found near tanks, *Andropogon muricatus*) and some fish, where they cook three handfuls of rice and a meat-curry with

1. Dr. Campbell calls it *Bulan* (a method of exorcism), page 87. *Santali to English Dictionary*.

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764 [782] [824]

fish added, to be offered to the gods at the cross-road.

On the conclusion of the cremation, water is poured on the pyre, first by the man who sets fire to the body, next by the pall-bearers and lastly by all the members of the tribe present. A bone from the forehead of the deceased is now gathered and kept inside the earthen pot, specially carried for the purpose, and buried under the earth near a *sal*-tree. This practice is uniform throughout Mayurbhanj and Santal Parganas. [784] The funeral party now returns home after bathing themselves and crunching *dhup* (incense).

Now it is time for the meal already cooked at home to be carried to the cross-road, where, near a cottage specially built for the purpose, it is offered to *Maran Burn* (the chief presiding deity) and the spirit of the deceased. [782] After this propitiation, the improvised hut is burnt down, and the party returns home. Custom requires that the head of the household and his wife should partake of the remnant of the offerings along with the villagers, and thereafter, some men will fall in a trance (*jhupar*) and impersonate *Maran Burn* and the deceased, who are closely questioned as regards the death. 764 787 Then an uncanny conversation proceeds for a time about the world of spirits.

A sample of the questions and answers may

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persons belonging to the same totem are affected, and they desist from eating fish, meat and oil, nor do they borrow fire from another man's house for nine days, till the *asidha* (ceremonial pollution) continues.

On the expiry of the period, the Headman arrives at the house in mourning with the village elders and the other invited relatives. A Santal barber then shaves the members of the family, whereupon, they bathe after rubbing their bodies with oil and oil-cake. Now, a ceremony follows when three tooth-sticks, four fingers in length, oil, oil-cake, *narkan hasa* (a kind of earth to wash the hair) are arranged on three *Sal*-leaves and offered to *Maraṅ Buru* (the chief presiding deity), the deceased and the dead ancestors, with prayers so that *Maraṅ Buru* may admit the released spirit after purifying it with all these materials.

Now, all men have a ceremonial bath closely followed by the women. A *Ṭika Murmu* now addresses the gathering, "They were so long under *ashida*. Now they are purified. We can now take them back." Now all shout *hòṛibol* as a sign of approval. Two men now again fall into a trance (*jhupar*) and impersonate *Maraṅ Buru* and the dead man. They are liberally plied with a supply of rice-beer, along with the "Mòṇṛèn hòṛ" (village elders). At night, fowls are offered by the tribe

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765 (*Simkutam*) and the inmates of the house worship
783 them (*Marañ Buru* and the deceased) with a hotch-
[782] potch, called *Giritora*. The ceremonies now conclude with a tribal feast and drink.

769 Thereafter, some rice and vegetables are kept on leaf-plates and later, deposited in a basket along with a water-pot, as a meal spread for the spirit of the deceased. Next, it is hung from a rafter of the deceased's house. The following morning, the basket is closely inspected ; and, if any food-particles can be seen, it is believed that the deceased has eaten the food and has washed his hands with the water in the pot.

765 *Iiling Dabar* (*going to the river Damodar with the bones*)

Now the day arrives for carrying the bones of the dead to be consigned to the holy waters of Damodar. The elders with the Headman begin to pour in the deceased person's house. Some prepare
[787] sacks for carrying food-stuff and the bone, while two others fall in a trance (*jhupar*) impersonating again the dead man and *Marañ Buru*, when their wishes are consulted as to the person who will carry the bones. On the reply of the person impersonating the deceased, the man is shown his luggage.
[782] Now three fowls are sacrificed in honour of *Marañ*
[769] *Buru*, the ancestor-spirits and the dead man, the

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heart being reserved for the Chief Presiding Deity (*Maraṅ Buru*) and the remnants of the sun-dried rice that accompanied the offerings, are carefully preserved to be carried along to Damodar.

Next, the bones previously buried are carried to the cross-road, washed with water and *hàṇḍia ràsi* (the best part of rice-beer), being rubbed within the folds of a yellow-coloured cloth. The women offer presents of money to the bone, and it is placed inside the sack prepared for the purpose. The empty pot (which contained the bone so long), is now placed on three twigs of *Kendu* tree (called so in Oriya) while the carrier walks round it thrice and then facing east breaks it amidst cries of *Hòribol* by the village-elders. Thereafter, he leaves for his destination being escorted by two men to the *Gadi* (halting place for men going towards Damodar).

Bhandan or Final Purification

After the *jaṅ baba* (the bones of the dead) are deposited in the Damodar river, offerings like the *Pindòs* of the Hindus are prepared with mud, tooth-picks, parched rice and sweet-meats on three *sal*-leaves on an altar, when *Maraṅ Buru*, the dead ancestors and the deceased are propitiated.

Now, on the day for *Bhandan*, the relatives and the friends of the family in mourning arrive at the house of the deceased together with the village-

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elders. The men-folk are shaved and, thereafter, both men and women repair to the *jòl-ghat* (public bath). Coming back, two men again impersonate *Maraṅ Burn* and the deceased, and are offered *bàṇḍia ràsi* (the best part of rice-beer); fowls and goats are sacrificed in their honour in the yard. A meal is prepared with rice and offered inside the house, while the villagers are plied with rice-beer and treated to a feast. The meat of the sacrificed animal is divided in a peculiar way, the villagers being entitled to the upper side when it was felled on the ground, the lower falling to the share of him who provided it.

The ceremonies conclude at Mayurbhanj with *Kandh Bhojani*, when some Santals, impersonating Brahmins and Vaishnavs, are fed by the family, and *Bhandar Bodh*, which requires a barber, similarly acting his part, to be presented with rice and meat showing undoubted influences of Hinduism.

IDEAS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

At this stage, we think it will be instructive to give the reader some idea about the Santal's belief in a life hereafter.

The Heaven (*Serma disom*, lit. sky-country) is situated up in the blue skies. It is also called *Svòròg*. There the gods, *Maraṅ Burn* (the Chief Presiding Deity) and others live. At times they also

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Eròk' Sim (June)

796 [243] The first agricultural festival of the tribe, *Eròk' Sim*, is connected with the sowing of paddy seeds in June.

796 782 It begins with each house-holder subscribing fowls which are sacrificed by the *Naeke* (village priest) at the *Jabèrthan* (Holy Grove) in honour of Maraṅ Buru, Jahèr era, Mòṇṛèṅko, Pargana, Gosaṅe era and Mañjhi Haṛam, one for each. A speciality is that the Boundary Deity is offered a black fowl, while the remaining ones are sacrificed to the deities presiding over the adjacent quarters of the boundary. The priest then utters the following incantation:—

[539] "We salute you, Creator (Bapu Ṭhàkur), Jahèr era, Maraṅ Buru and others. In the name of the sowing festival, we are offering sacrifice unto you so that we may sow in one quarter and in twelve quarters these may flourish in a bumper crop. Let the wind bring rains. Let rains shower in profusion. Let no diseases visit the villages such as colic pain, head-ache, and bowel-complaints. Convey these diseases away in golden water-carrying apparatus, bound with golden chains, elsewhere, from the direct harm of the tribe. Let our cattle increase in number. Protect them from the attacks of wild animals, when they will frequent the jungles. Protect our hunting-dogs."

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Thereafter, a special dish is cooked with meat and rice boiled together. All the Santals then dine at the *Jahèrthan*. But the meat of the fowls offered to Jahèr era and Mònrènko can be eaten by the Nacke (priest) alone.

On the second and third days of the festival, each house-holder sacrifices fowls to Abge Boṅga (the god of the Santal males), Oṛak' Boṅga (the Household deity), the Patriarchs of the tribe and Maraṅ Buru (the Chief Presiding Deity). Songs and dances *en masse* conclude the *Eròk' Sim*, the June sowing festival.

Eròk' Sim, (mentioned also by Dr. Campbell and Risley) is observed all over by the Santals; but at Mayurbhanj, it passes under the more Hinduised name of *Asharia*.

Hàriàṛ Simko (July)[1]

The month of July sees the celebration of the *Hàriàṛ Simko*, when thanks are offered to the gods as the paddy appears green and there are indications of a good crop. A peculiar feature of the ceremonials is that the village deities alone are worshipped on this occasion, but the prayers offered are

1. This is the approximate time for this festival in the Santal Parganas. Risley is, however, disposed to place the *Hàriàṛ Sim* (the feast of the sprouting rice, as he calls it) in September-October (Bhadra).

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almost identical to the *Erok' Sim*, the June sowing festival.

That this is an essential Santal festival is corroborated both by Risley and Dr. Campbell, but the Mayurbhanj Santals do not seem to observe it any longer.

Iṛi Gundli Nànwàni (The Millet Festival—August)

This festival is connected with the offering of the first fruits of millet (Iṛi, *Panicum milleceum* : Gundli, *Panicum frumentaceum*) to the tribal gods of the Santals.

The essentials of the festival are that the *Nacke* (priest) after a purificatory ablution goes to the field of a *raiyat* (tenant) where the crop has ripened and harvests as much as he can. Then he goes to the *Jahèrthan*, cleanses it with cow-dung and offers the corn to all the gods of the Holy Grove viz. Jahèr era, Mòṇṛènko, Maraṅ Hòṛ, Gosa*ne* era and Pargana. Next he spills milk and utters the hymn:—

'We salute you Creator (Bapu Ṭhàkur) and Jahèr era. We offer you the first-fruits of our corn. We shall eat these, but let us have no bowel-complaints or head-ache."

The priest then returns to the village and going to the shrine in the Headman's house offers

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the new corn with a similar prayer. The remainder of the millet, he takes home for himself.

The Millet Festival, called *Mucbri*, exists in all its details in Mayurbhanj and is observed by the Santals there.

Gamah Purnima (August)

Side by side with these harvest-festivals, the Santals of Mayurbhanj observe *Gamah Purnima* on the full-moon of *Sravan* (August), when cows are fed with salt, *mohua* flowers, rice, the corrosive *bhela* fruit and a grass called *mutha*, their horns being copiously rubbed with oil. Thereafter, men and women dance round a Karam (*Adina Cordifolia*) branch, planted at the *akhra* (place for dance), a special *Karam* dance, and on the conclusion immerse it in water. Ancestors are also propitiated with offerings of rice-beer. The Santals observe the festival along with some of the Hindus. All wear new clothes and indulge in feasts and drinks, not forgetting to feed Brahmins and Vaishnavas.

Karam Pòròb (September-October)

This is a festival observed in September-October. The males of the village go after nightfall and cut a branch of a *Karam* tree (*Adina Cordifolia*.) which they fix in the village lane (*kulhi*) and round which the young people dance till morning, when the Karam branch is thrown into a tank.

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796 *Karam* branch is thrown into a tank. No sacrifices
[782] are offered, but a libation of liquor is poured out to the manes of the village-chief and to *Marak Buru*.[1]

796 184 Although at first sight, it appears similar to the Mayurbhanj *Gamah-Purnima*, it is not so. In Mayurbhanj, the *Karam puja* is performed for the sake of amusement and welfare of the villagers during the *Gamah Purnima* or the *Sohrae*, as we shall see later. The *Karam Pòròb* may not be performed by the Mayurbhanj Santals if they do not like it and no harm to the villagers is thought to result from its non-performance. This is an extra festival in Mayurbhanj. But it should be noted that there are some who worship the *Karam Boṅga* and perform the *pòròb* as a hereditary practice. But although it is in existence in Mayurbhanj, the festival is observed only occasionally.

Ianthar (*November*)

796 [782] [793] On the occasion of the celebration of the *Ianthar* in November, the villagers subscribe towards a hog or a ram in honour of the tribal deity, *Ianthar*; and it is sacrificed before the *Parganathan* (the shrine of the village deity, *Pargana*) by a special priest called *Kuḍàm Naeke*. The special feature of the festival

1. Dr. Campbell, *Santali to English Dictionary*, page 318.

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The special feature of the festival is that articles for worship are supplied by the priest himself, and only the male members of the tribe are allowed to eat the meat of the animals sacrificed. The priest then prays to the god *Ianthar* with the following incantations:—

We salute thee Father Creator *Pargana*.
We offer you all these in the name of *Ianthar*;
We pray that whatever we may eat, we may digest.
Let there be no diseases like headache, diarrhoea and bowel-complaints.
And bless our crop in the field, and grain in the barn.
Protect them from rats and other pestilence.

Ianthar (called by Risley *Ianthar puja*) is in effect the offering of the first fruit of low-land paddy, as *Iri Gundli* is of millets. Another name for the festival is *Baibar Horo* Nanwàni.

In course of our enquiries in Mayurbhanj, many Santals stated that this festival passes under the name of *Maamane*[1] there, as was very clear from the fact

1. One wonders if the name is Mak' *Mónrén* in disguise. It is stated by Dr. Campbell to be a festival observed by the Santals after five years or so when the god "Mónrènko" is propitiated with the sacrifice of a white goat. The account in the District Gazeteer of the Santal Parganas considers it "an occasional sacrifice performed as the result of a vow made at a time of great distress", when sacrifices are made to all the national *bongas* in the *labérthan*.

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pestilence and epidemics affecting the Santals may be got rid of; and they reply in their hypnotic spell, suggesting ways out of the problems. On the conclusion the village-priest asks the Santals impersonating the deities to leave the grove.

On the morning of the second day, called *Sardi*, the *Godet* collects rice and chicken from all the houses. If a dance is decided upon, men and women go to the *Jahérthan* (Holy Grove), dancing and singing all the way with cymbal and kettle-drum accompaniments with the *Naeke* (priest) at the head, carrying the things procured by him on the previous day together with a pot of rice-beer. Closely following the priest, goes a bachelor youth with an earthen pitcher. Thus they reach the Holy Grove and clean the spot with cow-dung. Now the priest reaps some paddy from a field he chooses, and offers them with the prayers we have noted while describing *Janthar* festival in the other Santal areas. Fowls are sacrificed to the five gods, and the Boundary deity is propitiated by the priest at a separate place with offerings of rice-beer. All these over, the women return home. Men stay on and prepare the tribal dinner which they eat by the afternoon. The priest himself cooks near the shrine of Jahèr era. He offers the meal to the five deities of the grove and eats the lot himself.

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of the audience. The feet of the successful cow are then ceremonially washed.[1]

The second day is devoted to the preparation of food for the different tribal gods, in whose honour animals like fowls, goats and pigs are sacrificed. Ancestor-spirits are also worshipped and their memory honoured and offerings and libations made to them at home by heads of families. The evening is spent in community feasts on a large scale with drinks of rice-beer offered to the gods and thereafter drunk by the members of the tribe.

The climax of the ceremonials reaches with the worship of cows (*Gohal Puja*). When all are sleeping, young men of the tribe keep vigil and go from place to place to awaken the cows, beginning with the Headman's house, playing on pipes and kettle-drums.

The following is a song sung on the occasion: —

Gàini còlilo siribinda bònè ho,
Màhisini carae gaṅga para jo yo re,
Màhisini carae gaṅga para jo.

---

1 E. G. Man, in his *Sonthalia and the Sonthals* (p. 57) in this connection refers to the Egyptian myth of the "Bull and the Egg." The ceremony consists in newly laid hen's eggs being placed on the village lane and oxen driven past, and the one who stoops to smell the egg is held in high estimation for the year. "I believe," says Man, "the Egyptian mythology states that the earth came out of an egg which the bull broke."

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the Hindu festival associated with the worship of the goddess *Kali*. The essential difference between this and the Santal Parganas festival, we have noted in the foregoing pages, is that there is no *Hako katkòm* (catching fish and crabs) and *Jale* (the day of greetings) which concludes the function. Although there is bound to be some overlapping, we propose to deal with this in some detail, so that the reader can have some idea of the special features seen at Mayurbhanj.

On the morning of the first day, called *Um* or *Goṭh Puja*, the *Chatia* (an Oriya word for *Goḍet*) collects subscriptions of fowls and rice from all the villagers and heaps them in the house of the priest. The villagers soon assemble there. All ingredients for the worship, such as cow-dung, sun-dried rice, vermilion, *mithi* (a kind of spice), powdered rice (sun-dried) are placed in a winnowing-fan which the priest carries in his right hand, whereas, in his left he takes a pot of water. He is followed by a villager carrying a pot of rice-beer. With the priest at the head, a silent procession of the village arrives at the *goṭh* (field where the cows graze). Here a spot is selected by the priest and cleaned with cow-dung and water. Next, oblations are offered for the good of the corn, cattle and for the peaceful celebration of *Sohrae*. The Headman, thereafter, addresses the gathering requesting the tribe to be prepared

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796 for a period in which offences are to be connived at, as there is bound to be a good deal of drunkenness.

[782] On the conclusion of the preliminary *puja* at about ten a.m., the rice, fowls and rice-beer already collected, are offered to *Maraṅ Buru* and other deities. [793] Thereafter, these are cooked together by the villagers, while the *Naeke* (priest) prepares a separate dish with the heads of the fowls (because he is a pure and chaste person). Now, offering the dishes again to the gods like *Maraṅ Buru*, the *Naeke* leads the community feast and is followed by the tribe.

796 231 Towards evening, the cattle of the tribe are brought to the *Goṭh* and their horns rubbed with oil. They are then let loose near the spot where the tribe has eaten, and the man whose cow chances to eat the *sal*-leaf plate used by the *Naeke* (priest) is considered to be a very lucky one and endowed with the privilege of supplying a pot of *hàṇḍia* (rice-beer) for the next year's festival. He becomes the hero of the tribe, to be blest with good cattle and harvest, and is raised over the head and shown to the assembly. Eggs are also placed on *sal*-leaves; but cows are not made to walk upon them, as we saw in the Santal Parganas.

796 [633] [831] [786] [685] The nocturnal vigil at Mayurbhanj is practically the same as that during the night of *Gobal Puja*, the same songs are sung, but they add many of an erotic nature. But fruits and vegetables as gourds

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and sweet potatoes must be stolen from the houses of the villagers to be eaten with the Headman's share of rice-beer, and no sin attaches to it as during the *Nòstò Chòndrò* of the Hindus. Such thefts are called *lagarna* in Mayurbhanj. The object of the custom lies in the Santal belief that those who steal on such occasions will never be prosecuted on charges of theft, nor will such householders thus victimised be robbed by real thieves, a second time.

The second day in Mayurbhanj, is the day for *Sarḍi*, when *Gohal Puja* takes place. In the morning, an interesting dance is executed round a *Karam* branch which is brought by two bachelor youths and planted on the ground, cleansed with cow-dung by the maidens of the tribe. Old women circle round the tree with earthen lamps and offerings of sun-dried rice. This is closely followed by merry dance by the men and women of the tribe, in different groups.

With the noon, people offer fowls and pigs to *Kalimata*, the presiding deity of the cow-shed and to the ancestors ; and then ceremonially wash their agricultural implements as plough-shares and yokes, and anoint them with powdered rice and vermilion. Now it is time for meal, when, the animals sacrificed are eaten at home ; and this over, by evening, one will find the Santals *en masse* near the *akhra* (the village dancing yard) engaged in their songs and

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up the broom-stick. Mòntènko takes up the bow and arrow, while Marañ Buru, the pick-axe ; and the actor-deities then run to the grove followed by the young men. Jahèr era then sweeps the shrine, while the two others supervise. [796]

At night, they return from the grove. The priest, with piteous lamentations takes back the insignias the deities wore. All then sit on mats. The three actor-deities are then given a handful of rice each as propitiation, and questioned about the auguries. This is followed by a general incantation of the gods. [782] [787]

Next, the priest washes their feet beginning with Jahèr era. The deities themselves do so mutually, and the headman, the drummer, the *Kabi* (the singer), all participate in the ceremony. The balance of the water is then thrown on all, amidst general jumps and yells. The priest then asks for the water-pot, and makes Jahèr era, Marañ Buru and Mòntènko sit on the mats, when they are dispossessed of their spirit life. They are then entertained with a meal of rice and drinks of *hàndia* (rice-beer) along with the others present. But a peculiar thing is that the *Kabi* (the singer) is allowed a large share of the dinner and not allowed to return home.

Dances *en masse* with special songs for the Baha follow. Many of these are duets. One runs [535] [533]

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the branches with the flower, while Jahèr era plucks them in his basket. Then, they all return to the holy-grove, also gathering *mohua* (Bassia Latifolia) flowers on the way, where the priest receives them with a load of *sal*-flowers in a chequered napkin. The actor-deities are then enshrined in their respective huts. Fowls are sacrificed in their honour with a special incantation in honour of Baha and amidst songs and rejoicings, the priest offers the deities bunches of *sal* and *mohua* flowers. Then, after a mutual feet-washing ceremony, in which Jahèr era takes the lead, the balance of the water is sprinkled on them. Then there are shouts and yells when the deities are transformed into their real selves.

All then return to the village singing and dancing. The burden of these particular songs is that of an invitation to all the boys and the girls of the village to accept the special gift of a *sal*-flower from the priest, and to salute him in return. At night, the priest remains at the grove with his wife, who shares with him a special dish of a spotted fowl, cooked by her husband.

The third day, which symbolises the return home, is devoted to general feasting and merry-making. Some go to the *Jahèrthan* (grove), beat the kettle-drum and blow horns, indicating that the priest is returning home. All then tell one another, "Let us go and welcome the priest," and march to

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Jòm Sim.

796 [782] This is a festival in which offerings of sheep or goats are made to the Sun-god, *Siñ Boñga*. No definite time is fixed for the celebration of this sacrifice ; it may do if one performs it once in one's life-time, everything depending on the length of one's purse. Those who can afford it, generally perform the worship after every fifth year. It is not a public worship like the Flower-festival or the Harvest Home, as the village deities supposed to reside in the Holy Grove are not worshipped, nor 796 614 do the Santals as a tribe join it. It is a worship restricted to a particular clan in groups. So when the *Màrṇḍis* perform *Jòm Sim puja*, it is they and they alone who take part in it and invitations issued to other clans can only include the daughters of *Màrṇḍis*, married in other clans and their children. The funds, of course, are subscribed by the members of the clan.

[115] Jadabendra Mañjhi (a *Màrṇḍi*), an educated Santal of Mayurbhanj, working in the Secretariat there, thus gave us a description of the festival, soon after it was celebrated by his clan. He said that the *Màrṇḍis* according to custom perform this festival before the full-moon of *Falgun* (Feb.-March) or *Baisakh* (April-May) and not at any other time, a date being fixed by the clan in a meeting, and a goat castrated as a preparation for the festival.

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On the first day called *Um Narka* (purification), the members of the clan clean their houses, wash clothes and eat nothing except rice and *biri* (a pulse). Thereafter, some other goats are also castrated and the place of sacrifice is made clean and a pot of holy water placed there.

On this day the clan offers *pujas* to two gods whose names our informant did not disclose as a clan secret, but added that *Brahma* and *Ganesh* of the Hindus are the nearest equivalent to the deities, who are impersonated by two Santals after falling in a trance. They are solemnly asked their names and on their answer, they are shown a goat and a ram to be offered to them the next day, for their approval. As they express their satisfaction, they are prayed to resume their normal selves.

Before sun-rise on the second day called *Sàrdi*, the clan assembles at the place of sacrifice and offers the goat to the Santal equivalent of *Ganesh* and the ram to *Brahma*. Two ancestors are also invoked with offerings of fowl, the spotted ones being meant for the ancestors on the mother's side, while the red ones for those on the father's side. *Maraṅ Burn* (the chief presiding deity) gets a white fowl. The peculiarity of the sacrifice is that the ram, goat and the white fowl are sacrificed by being killed by one stroke as is done by the Hindus, whereas, the spotted and red fowls are slowly cut. Prayers are

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796 614 [782] [252] then offered to the gods to protect the clan from earthly maladies, bowel-complaints being specially named as a dreaded disease. The meat, thereafter, is cooked with salt and water. The *Màrṇḍis* must eat the heads of the animals sacrificed and the rest goes to the share of the invited.

The *Baskes*, when questioned, said that they need not like *Màrṇḍis* start the festival before sunrise; any time before noon suits their clan calendar. [782] [252] Their sacrificial meat is cooked with turmeric, spices and salt, and their gods are similiar to those of the *Màrṇḍis*.

796 *Pata* (Santal *Còròk* in mid-April).

[177] We have seen from the foregoing that the Santals, in addition to their orthodox festivals, associate themselves with the various Hindu ceremonials like the *Durga Puja*, *Kali Puja* and others. [174] From the evidence at our disposal, one cannot be sure as to when they began their association, but as one looks to the *Pata*, the Santal version of Hindu *Còròk*, (Hook-swinging festival) it seems to be pretty old. In the chapter on *Bitlàbà* or Santal social ostracism, we noticed that the final trial of the offenders takes place on *Pata cando*, meaning the month of *Còròk*, and the orthodox meaning of the word *Pata* is stated to be "a festival in honour of *Mahadeo*."

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The customary practices, in connection with the *Pata*, vary in different areas. There are some in the Santal Parganas who show signs of supposed spirit-possession (the Santal *jhupar*) with the arrival of the festival. They go here and there like Tagore's maniac (*'khepa'*) in eternal search for the "touch-stone." They dive in a pond, ransack the forests, search the hills, and at last coming upon a stone shout, "Eureka" ("We have found."). And the admiring audience see that they have unearthed a stone, which they all acclaim as the symbol of *Mahadeo*. These people, called *Bhòktas*, then run to the conveners of the Hindu festival *Còròk* and prevail upon them to worship the images ceremonially, and if listened to, they are permitted to join with the devotees and take part in the ceremonials.

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There are others who arrange their own festivals. Such people go begging from house to house for three days previous, and with the proceeds, they buy milk. Then on the eve of the *Pata*, they assemble at a field, where the *Bhòktas* (devotees) erect a hut-temple with subscriptions collected from the tribe; and offer milk, rice and *ghee* to the deity *Mahadeo* with a good deal of ceremony, a goat being sacrificed in a place away from the improvised temple. The ceremonials conclude with special songs and dances in which the Santals take part with a great deal of gusto.

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The chief presiding deity of the Santals is "Maraṅ Buru." ('Maraṅ' means great, and 'Buru,' hill). Literally, he is the Great Mountain of the Santal traditions, noted in the first chapter. It is said that he possesses the widest possible powers and is associated both with good and mischievous godlings. He must be offered a white fowl, and if a goat is offered, it too must be white and uncastrated. He should be propitiated with a liberal offer of rice-beer during all Santal festivals, and birth, death and marriage ceremonies in the tribe.

Another village-deity is "Mòntènko Turuiko" (Lit. the five-six), who is now a single entity, but addressed in the plural (the suffix *ko* indicates plurality). The Santals believe that they were five brothers (Mòntèn = five) who were wedded to six sisters named Dangi, Pungi, Hisi, Dumni, Chita and Kapra. (Turui = six). They are supposed to preside over the welfare of the village. His younger sister, "Gosane era," constitutes a separate deity of the *Jabèrthan* (Holy Grove), and is offered worship in a different hut. "Jahèr era," another sister of "Mòntènko" is the goddess of *Jabèrthan* (Holy Grove) named after her. She has a stone assigned as her symbol. The Santals woship her for the general welfare of the village, so that their children may have good health, crops may grow in plenty and youths and maids of the tribe may be

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776 married quickly. For propitiation, she needs a
[782] brown hen (*Herak' Sim*); and if a goat is sacrificed in her honour, it must be a red she-goat.

776 In course of our investigations at Mayurbhanj,
778 we were shown stones in the *Jabèrthan* (Holy Grove)
346 which were supposed to represent these deities. During all public festivals, huts are raised to worship them suitably. It was stated that in Mayurbhanj three huts are raised; one to house "Jahèr era," "Marañ Buru" and "Mòntènko," a second for "Gosane era," and the third for another village deity, "Mañjhi Haṛam." But there are instances when a fourth one is insisted on by younger folk, to honour the younger brother of Mañjhi, called "Hudiñ Mañjhi Haṛam." In our references to the
[184] practice in the Santal Parganas (e.g. *Baha*, Santal Sal-blossom festival) we have seen that only "Jahèr era," "Gosane era," "Marañ Buru," and "Mòntènko" have huts for them in the Holy Grove. Mañjhi has his place no doubt, but he is worshipped at the *Mañjhithan*, a separate shrine in the village.

776 As a matter of fact Mañjhi Boṅga may be
[775] supposed to represent the spirits of dead Mañjhis (village Headman). But he is only second to another dignitary, "Pargana," who has power over witches. Both of these are village-deities, although they may
[184] not find a place in the *Jabèrthans* of Mayurbhanj Santals.

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Hill Spirits

Apart from the village-spirits mentioned before, the Santals people their hills with numerous super-human agencies, called *Pats*. These powers inspire them with a fear and naturally, they are propitiated so that they may not do the Santals any harm. 776 [782]

The enquirer into *pat* spirits comes across a host of names dotting the whole country-side, all deriving their names from the hills, big or small, they are supposed to reside in.

Rup Narain Mañjhi (Baske) of Pokhuridiha, Mayurbhanj, stated that the Santals in his locality worship the following hill-spirits:— [115]

1. Berha Pat—He is the chief hill-spirit. He is worshipped for success in hunting and for protecting the Santals from harms incidental thereto; and secondly, for protecting people when undertaking any journey. The deity delights in receiving red fowls and uncastrated he-goats as sacrificial offerings. 776 782

2. Mangar Pat—This deity is worshipped for reasons similar to those stated before. There were times when this god received human sacrifices.

3. Budha Pahar—A male deity. He is worshipped for help towards successful journeys. He receives a cock of any colour and an uncastrated goat for propitiation.

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782 4. Pauri Pat – A female deity. She is invoked for success in journeys. Previously human sacrifices were offered to her, but now she receives fowls and uncastrated goats as offerings.

[115] Surendra Mañjhi of village Chandua, Mayurbhanj, stated that in their locality, they have the following *Pat* spirits:—

1. Chandra Pat—Worshipped if there is no rain, with offerings of sweets, bananas, hens of any colour and uncastrated goats.

2. Duarsani Pat – Same as before.

He added that all these Pat spirits are also called *Thakran* in Mayurbhanj.

Amongst other *Pats*, lying distributed throughout Mayurbhanj, mention was made of "*Dagarsila*" who is invoked during warfare. He is propitiated by a red cock and an uncastrated goat. Mention should also be made of *Sula Pat*, whose aid is sought during litigation, epidemics amongst men or cattle or during droughts. This deity has no special liking of any colour of the fowls or goats to be sacrificed in his honour. Next comes *Burn Bonga*, the horrible deity who delights in human blood. Although human sacrifice is now a rare phenomenon even to be stealthily indulged in, blood-curdling traditions linger of human victims being decoyed and sacrificed by the Santals out to wreak private

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vengeance, or to gain riches. A very similar deity, requiring to be propitiated by human blood, was mentioned by Rupnarain Mañjhi of Mayurbhanj. She is a female spirit called *Ròṅkini*, residing on a hill called Panapachet in Singbhum, where in the past, she was offered human sacrifices.

The men who are employed to decoy human victims (may be of any sex or age) are called *Oṇḍga*. And such is the fear of a Santal about these *oṇḍgas*, that they sometimes mistake any stranger loitering in the country-side as such kidnappers; and instances are on record in the Santal Parganas of such innocent men being stoned to death by infuriated Santals.

A recorded case of human sacrifice to such deities can be seen in Mayurbhanj Law Reports (Bhima Naik vs. Mayurbhanj State, 1934-35) which refers to a case wherein certain Santals and Kols were tried on a charge of murdering a lad, "unique in the annals of crime in Mayurbhanj" as C. J. Dr. P. K. Sen, characterised it. The facts were these:—

One Bhima Mañjhi of Kalajhori, Bamanghati (Mayurbhanj), was supposed to have left a buried treasure. His son, Laso had a *jhupar* (sooth-sayer working himself under an ecstatic trance, in which he is inspired by oracular powers) with the aid of an exorcist; and a particular place was located, but nothing was really found.

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776 nothing was really found. One Mangla Mañjhi
782 heard about it and it "roused his curiosity and cupidity." He now requisitioned the services of Bhima Naik, a famous exorcist, who decided upon human sacrifice to propitiate the deity guarding the treasure. Next, a lad named Chotrai was decoyed, his head severed, and the blood held in a small earthen pot and offered to the deity.

Basuki or Basumata

Apart from the hill and village spirits mentioned above, the Santals worship *Basuki* or *Basumata* for the welfare of agriculture, during the month of Ashar, with offerings of fowls and goats. Such
[731] worships do not form a regular feature of the tribal calendar, but are occasional invocations during apprehended crop-failure.

Ancestor Spirits

769 If the idea of death has profoundly puzzled
761 humanity, the Santals are no exception to the rule. In their crude way, they have built up a theory regarding the disembodied spirits which regards the dead ancestors with religious awe and reverence.

769 Thus it is that we see that in all festivals, public or private, *Haṛamko* or *Buṛha-Buṛhi* (the old man

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and woman) are offered a cock and a hen respectively, together with a liberal share of rice-beer. During harvest festivals, like *Sobrae* or the Flower Festival (*Baba*), fowls are sacrificed in their honour with prayers so that the members of the tribe may have no diseases such as bowel-complaints. The reverence paid to the memory of the dead relatives by the Santals will also be amply illustrated by the fact that the departed spirits of the dead brothers and unmarried sisters receive supplementary worship, after the propitiation of *Burha-Burhi*.

Mischievous Spirits

Santals have about a number of mischievous minor spirits, who find a devilish delight in bringing epidemics to men or cattle, unless propitiated with appropriate rituals.

We came across three such representatives in the Santal pantheon, *Kalachandi*, a male spirit, and *Kalamahichandi* and *Nasòn-kudra*, both female evil spirits, as exercising an uncanny influence on the tribe. The offerings that please them are *Ihitipiti* (Oriya, a kind of worm), frogs, grass-hoppers, fowls, human blood, vermilion, sun-dried rice, powdered charcoal and burnt clay from ovens. It is noteworthy that earthen images are made to represent these deities. They are at first invoked in the

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776 household, and thereafter, at the junction of two
782 roads. Human blood can only be offered at the latter place.

Amongst lesser Boŋgas under this head, mention should be made of Acraeli Boŋga (or Jodhe Boŋga as in Mayurbhanj), who presides over the interests of married women. We were told that if a woman steals anything from her parents' home, and takes it to her husband's place, this godling maintains a close watch over the stolen properties and punishes the household by bringing illness and even death. The tenacity of this deity is almost leech-like, and to make him return to his own domain involves costly offerings.

The *Bagbut Boŋga* or tiger spirit is worshipped during the annual winter Harvest Home at Mayurbhanj, in order that tigers may not kill the cattle of the Santals. During the hypnotic trance (*Jhupar*) that precedes the sacrifice to the deity, the person possessed does not cut off the head of the fowl with a knife, but springs tiger-like on the fowl and tears it off with his teeth.

776 Some Boŋgas of this description take the form of young men and women for the purpose of meeting with Santals of the opposite sex. The result of such
[753] unions invariably lead to illness; and the attentions
[755] of the Boŋga-lovers can be prevented by elaborate magic and charms by Witch Doctors.

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Household Deity (Oṛak' Boṅga) and Secret God (Abge Boṅga)

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It is the custom with the Santals not to disclose the names of the Oṛak' Boṅgas or Abge Boṅgas presiding over the family to any one but the eldest son. They are particularly careful to guard the names as a close secret even from their wives, for fear, that they might obtain sinister influence over these deities, turn into witches and eat up the members of the family.[1] We gathered at Mayurbhanj that the Oṛak' Boṅgas are invoked for the welfare of the household during the winter Harvest Home, Flower Festival and the sowing festivals with offerings of goats, fowls and pigs. The Abge Boṅgas are worshipped near white-ant hills with offerings of rams, fowls and pigs. It is remarkable that the whole family can partake of the sacrificial offerings to Oṛak' Boṅgas, but it is reserved for

1 The following names were procured from Christian Santals by Mr. Skrefsrud:—

Oṛak' Boṅga:—(1) Baspahar. (2) Deswali. (3) Sas. (4) Goraya. (5) Sarchawdi. (6) Thuntatursa.

Abge Boṅga:—(1) Dharamsore or Dharasanda. (2) Ketkomkudra. (3) Champa-Denagar. (4) Garhsinka. (5) Lilachandi. (6) Dhanghara. (7) Kudrachandi. (8) Bahara. (9) Duarseri. (10) Kudraj. (11) Gossinera. (?) (12) Achali. (13) Deswali.

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men alone to taste those presented before the Abge Bongas.

Selection of Village Priest

We consider it appropriate at this stage to give the readers some idea as to how the priest, the human connecting link between the tribe and the gods, is selected. When the priest dies childless or resigns voluntarily, village elders assemble at the house of the Headman or the priest. Next, the six deities of holy grove are invoked by the men sitting on mats, each with a winnowing-fan and some sun-dried rice given by the priest, if he is resigning, or by the Headman, if the priest is dead. As usual some begin to shake their heads in a hypnotic trance and get possessed. These men in trance are asked as to who they are. They name themselves after the gods they stand for. Thereafter, they are questioned as to whom they are recommending for the post. They answer. But it is customary that Marah Buru will first propose a name, and the other actor-deities invariably second and support him.

We have said before that the priest gets rent-free lands, out of whose proceeds he can buy sacrificial fowls and other requirements of office. Should he commit any social wrong, he can be removed from office by the tribal assembly.

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CHAPTER X

MAGIC AND WITCH-CRAFT

In course of the previous chapter, we have given the reader some idea as to how the Santal mind reacts in the presence of the mysteries of life. We have seen that they have elaborate rituals to propitiate the deities, with whom they people this world. In the present chapter, we shall see how they deal with the super-normal phenomena. That "there are more things in heaven and earth" than is dreamt of in one's philosophy is the conclusion of puzzled humanity at large, and the Santals have their own special methods of dealing with them by magical practices.

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To Remove Drought

When there is a drought, and the agricultural well-being of the tribe is thus threatened, several Santal villages combine together and subscribe funds for the propitiation of *Sima Boṅgas* (the boundary deities). Some men fall in a trance. These men, inspired with oracular powers, are requested to state reasons for the calamity that has befallen the tribe and to suggest remedies. Generally, the tribal troubles are hinted by those who impersonate the invisible gods, and solemn assurances are held out

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731 782 787 [793] that special offerings would be offered when rain falls. And when rains come on, the village-priest propitiates the boundary-deities with the promised rituals and sacrifices.

To Remove Village Illness

[776] When epidemics break out in the tribe, the village deities *Gram pat*, *Bisam Thakurani* (Hindu goddess, *Kali*), together with all the gods of the Holy Grove are invoked by the priest at the head of the tribe. The preliminary procedure of the worship is the same as noted above in connection with removal of droughts with the addition that the witches responsible for the calamity may be mentioned by the men in trance supposed to speak for the deity.

755 782 787 [776] When any member of a Santal household falls ill, the head of the house arranges for an invocation to the *Orak' Boṅga* (household deity). As a preliminary to the worship of the deity, some men fall in a hypnotic stupor, in which they are supposed to have oracular powers. Thereupon, the householder

755 782 787 539 asks the man in trance:—

Dè tabe gosane òkòe boṅga, òkòe buru, heken seteren, jaotya janama lie odong, tabe gosane pataganda sira ganda bil akan ate akan gosane.

Translation:—

"O thou deity! What god art thou? What

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Hill-Spirit hast thou come here?, To what order (of spirits) dost thou belong?. Answer questions. Then, O deity! we shall spread a wooden-seat (or stone-seat) for thee." 755 782 787 539

The men in trance reply:—"Hinsaha (very well I am answering)."

Next follows an answer giving the name of the *Orak' Bonga*. The householder then prays, "So and so is ill ; he is being treated by so and so. Do please help the doctor to cure the disease. If the patient recovers, I shall offer you this (fowls, rams or goats)".

The men in trance now give appropriate answers, as to what god to propitiate, with what offerings and when, or may suggest other ways and means to get rid of the calamity. 755 782 787

This prayer is offered at the door of the room (Bhitar duar), which is considered holy as the abode of the household deity. This room is not open to strangers, and even members of the house can enter this only after a ceremonial purification. If the disease is serious, villagers are called, and *Jhupar* takes place to find out the appropriate remedy. [778] [783]

Belief in Evil Eye

Like the other aboriginal tribes of the Central Belt, the Santals believe in women possessing a malevolent eye, that can bring ruin on people by 754

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Ojha will take the fowl through his legs with a swinging movement of his body thrice round the bed of the patient. After this, he will require a wick with oil and on it he pours some incense and as he goes round the patient, he does the same. Next, the *Ojha* takes the fowls and offers them to the god of the disease and to the presiding deity of the *Ojha* himself. All these he will do outside the village. Next, after taking the sacrificed fowls, the *Ojha* will go home."

Thus the *Ojha* (Witch-doctor) is a person who has the power of *mantras* to waste away the evil-influences applied to men or women by *Ḍàns* or *Nañjòms*. To be perfect in his craft, he has sometimes to be in league with the witches. There is another class of men called "Sakha" in Mayurbhanj, who serve as sorcerers. They can test fortune by lots and can indicate who is a witch and has brought illness in a person or animal.

The orthodox witch-finder is called "Jan-Guru". There are two methods of training in the art. The first method requires the pupil eager for such a training, to place himself under a "Jan-Guru" as a *chela* (pupil). Then the *Guru* tells him the names of the *Boṅgas*, the process of worship and how to exercise the power of a "Jan-Guru." The pupil practises the lessons for some days, and when the *Boṅgas* are pleased, he becomes successful

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791 and is then called a "Jan-Guru". As regards
796 the second method, it is stated that there are several
[787] *Guru Boṅgas*. The man who is devoted to them and has faith on them sees them coming to him in dreams. He then knows that the *Boṅgas* are pleased with him and want his worship. If the pupil likes
[782] it, he offers vermilion and *dhup* (incense) in the names of the *Boṅgas*, he saw in his dream. The *Boṅgas* again appear before him in dreams and tell him of their powers and ask him to worship them. With the series of *Boṅgas* thus appearing before him, the pupil becomes *Koñka* (puzzled). He then goes to the *Boṅgathans* (the places where the *Boṅgas* live) and remains there for some days. He talks with the spirits and they assure him that whenever he remembers them, they will be at his beck and call and tell him whatever he wants to know. Thus getting his boon, the pupil returns home and continues to worship the *Boṅgas* and practise his power.

Conclusion

754
755 Magic and witch-craft are an essential part of
789 the belief of most of the Hinduised tribes and the
[171] pre-Dravidian people resident in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Although it cannot be vouched for a
[177] certainty as to whether the Santals borrowed it
[174] wholesale from the Hindus, there is some internal

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who was conveyed to the nether-world and detained till he grew home sick.

The extent of interest taken by *Boṅgas* in human affairs, is best illustrated by another story, "The *Boṅga* Headman," in which we find how an invisible Headman advised Santals on all tribal matters and even helped the villagers with utensils for village-feasts.

If men have goats and cows for their cattle, the *Boṅgas* have their deer. This we see in "*Lakhan and the Boṅgas*".

Boṅgas can even be thieves. One of the folk-tales tells of such a spirit as residing in the house of the Headman, and we read how he stole every kind of grain and food, cooked and uncooked, from the houses of the villagers.

Whenever a Santal falls in trouble, he thinks a *Boṅga* requires propitiation. We read of seven brothers in "The *Boṅga's* victim," who do not hesitate to dedicate their beloved sister as a sacrifice to such a godling, as a reward to him for showing water to them after a tiresome hunt. [782]

They can be capable of gratitude. We see how a youth named Ramai was endowed with the third eye, through the grace of a *Boṅga* he had saved from exorcists, by which he saw *Boṅgas* ordinarily invisible and followed the speech of ants.

Again we hear how "The Sister-in-law who

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women reply in chorus. So they go on till about 3 a. m. in the morning. 535

It must be added, however, that "Lagren" is a very stimulating dance, and on these occasions the youths and maids of the tribe get plenty of opportunities for love-making. Even the steps of the dance provide facilities for courtship, as the couples face side-ways and talk as they dance. And after the dances, parties in love retire into the woods. 535 832

The songs, sung on these occasions, are mostly love-songs. An illustration is given here:— [533] [539]

Nadiaka dhare dhare
Kahar bansi baje,
Hai hai òntare kandiche.
Akhite dekhini, kanetò sunini,
Hai hai, amar òntare kandiche.

(Translation)

On the banks of the river,
Whose lute plays?
Alas! the heart weeps.
I haven't seen with eyes,
Nor heard with ears.
Alas, my heart weeps!

Nabin Mañjhi, Headman of Muruda, Mayurbhanj, said that when there are no rains, there are certain "Lagren" songs in invocation to the Rain- 533 731 782 789 [115]

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533 731 782 789 [539] god, which are sung to make the skies yield rain. One such sample is quoted below: –

Svarager hur hur
Prithimite dhula chilu urilò
Dhaner sisò chilu marilò
Manuser chati chilu phatilò he.

(Translation)

In the sky, clouds rumble, Oh god!
On the earth, dust flies.
Oh god! the ears of corn dry up.
The hearts of men are breaking, Oh god!

Dòn ènèc'

535 [585] This is danced during marriages generally. Mixed men and women choose their groups and form a lively circle. The women interlock their hands gracefully, whereas, men with *Nagera* and *Madal* stand in the centre forming an inner circle. As the music continues, the dancers advance two steps to the right in a general motion. Next, they gracefully extend each feet forward. Thus they dance for twenty minutes or so, while women sing in unison. When the dance finishes, it is now men's turn to sing, while women reply in a musical chorus. This goes on for some time, when again the drums resound; the countryside echoes and re-echoes with a merry din and the dance starts afresh.

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535 long steps forward, and next they move back with two steps of a shorter nature. It is a fascinating sight to see the ebony beauties bending their bodies half, and swinging up and down with a graceful lithe motion like a field of corn before the wind.

533 The *joie de vivre* knows no bounds. Kettle-
535 drums, cymbals and flutes fill the atmosphere with a jocund din, while the dance goes on for fifteen minutes with men singing and women replying in chorus.

Jàtur ènèc'

796 The time for this dance is the Harvest Festival
535 (Sòhrae) and the Flower-Festival (Baha), when the village-priest offers oblations to the deities of the Holy Grove at day time. Men dance separately in a circle outside the circular female group. The dancers take two steps forward, bend the knees and gracefully raise their folded hands. Next, they turn two steps backwards and swing the hands up and down in a parallel fashion. So they dance on till the completion of the ceremonies in the afternoon, men singing and women replying in chorus.

796 This is a purely devotional dance, in course of
• 782 which, the dancers salute the gods of the Holy
535 Grove, because they have given the Santals a bumper harvest (as during the *Sòhrae*, December Harvest

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Home) or because there are promises of a beautiful spring ahead (as during the *Baba*, Spring festival). The object of the dance is that should such dances take place, the tribe will have agricultural prosperity, children will have good health, diseases will not attack the Santals and there will be an all-round welfare to the village. So it is customary for the Santal to promise a *Jâtur* dance to the deity, in case of apprehended calamities as cholera or other epidemics.

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'Riñja ênêc'

The afternoons of "Gamah-Purnima' are the occasions for the dance known as Riñja. The youths and maids of the tribe form two separate circles, with musicians in the centre of each. The dancers do not inter-lock the hands, and each member dances singly in response to the melody sung. The "Riñja" has eight particular movements, and one sees the dancers making a circular movement with the hands raised sometimes, while the left hand swings gracefully. So the dance goes on, and the circular motions, backwards and forwards, draw applause from the spectators.

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"Riñja" is danced during "Karam Puja," and the object of the dance is to please the deities so that Santals may have prosperity in this material world.

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224 was a regular feature in old times but now it is organised more or less for the relaxation of state guests or when a wild animal troubles the people.

Deshua Sendra (Disom Gipitic' Sendra)[1].

[634] The date of this annual hunt is fixed by the Parganas of the hilly areas where the tribal excursion is made in the month of *Chaitra* or *Baisakh* (April—May). The information is sent round by means of a knotted string called *Girà gaṭh* conveyed by the Santals.

224 202 211

The *modus operandi* of this information may be thus explained. Supposing a string with fifteen knots reaches the village X, the villagers will unloose a knot. When it reaches the village Y, it means that fourteen days remain for the hunt taking place. The messenger carrying the notice is changed there and another takes his place. It is his duty to inform the place of *Gipitic'*, e.g. where the tribe would rest after the hunt.

224 782 [634] [793] The preliminaries regarding which portions of the jungle would be beaten by the people of particular *monzas* (areas) being fixed by the Parganas in consultation with the tribe, the *Dihri* of the area offers pujas to the presiding deity of the hill.

[178] [579] [211] 1 This hunt has been stopped since 1916 when a mêlée took place in Mayurbhanj, so the information sent round by a string full of knots cannot now be legally circulated.

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offers pujas to the presiding deity of the hill. Vermilion and red fowls are offered to the gods together with sun-dried rice and incense. As the fowls are sacrificed, the blood is poured on the sun-dried rice and offered to the other gods of the locality in their names. The head of the fowl lies on the ground and the body is kept for the meal of the *Dihri*. Next the *Dihri* salutes the deity by prostrating himself fully on the ground and thus invokes him:—

We are hunting in this jungle.
Let the hunting be safe.
Let us hunt in plenty.
Let not lions and tigers kill us.
Let no serpent bite us.

Now the news is conveyed by blowing a horn called *Sakwa* made of the horn of a *Gayal* (a species of ox, *Bos frontalis*). All men begin beating the jungle. The hunting goes on as musical instruments like the *Nagera*, *dhak*, *dhor* (small drum), *jharli* (a bell), cymbal are played upon by a band of musicians. The *Nagera* sounds "dubuń, dubuń, dubuń" but when the animals approach with a swift motion, it is changed to "dhibi, dhibi, dhibi." All men become aware of the advancing games. Starting approximately at 10 A.M., the hunt continues upto sunset, with bows and arrows, *tangis*, swords, *kapi* and *borolam* as weapons.

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shot. They also take evidence as regards the first, second and third shots.

The rest of the meat is taken by the villagers of the man who had the first shot and shared among themselves. It is worthy of note that even the hunting dogs employed in the chase receive their shares equally with men. Generally, the meat that goes to X's share is carried by his villagers home. The head of the game shot is divided into two parts, the first going to X, the other to the villagers of X. The Headman of X's village gets the left hind leg (*donde*). This is also conveyed home by the villagers, who, in return, receive a pot of rice-beer, twelve seers of rice, five pieces of turmeric and some salt. It is customary for the men thus presented to cook a hotch-poteh with the head of the hunted animal previously received for a common meal.

In case an animal like a *Gayal* or *Sambar* (a species of deer like an elk) is hunted by, say ten or twelve men, custom lays it down that the first five hunters will only receive their shares.

It should be noted that if X's wife is pregnant, he will not get the head of the animal and it will go to the villagers to be shared by them. The *'Dibri* gets a share of meat per each mouza of men who hunted the animals.

Another important feature deserves mention. It may be that in a *Deshua Sendra* there may be any

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224 trouble or games may not be at all available. Should
782 such misfortunes befall the tribe, a *Jhumpar* takes place in which the village deities and *Buru Boṅga* are invoked and represented by the hunters. Sal-
[824] leaves are woven to represent winnowing-fans. Leaves of *meral* (A small tree, *Phyllanthus Emblica*, Linn.) are substituted for sun-dried rice and rubbed on the
224 winnowing-fan. Three men fall in a hypnotic trance
782 and impersonate Marañ Buru, Jahèrera and Mòṇṭén-
789 ko. The fourth, Buru Boṅga, remains at a distance. These gods are asked for the reasons of the calamities, invoked to suggest remedies to get rid of the trouble, whereupon, the appropriate answers are received.

224 The night of the Gipitic' is spent by the Santals with a great deal of mirth and hilarity. Music, dance and feasts go on till sun-rise. The songs sung on the occasion are called Bir seren and several of them have been quoted in the appendix on sex-life. It will appear therefrom that they are of an erotic nature and we gathered that the prevailing atmosphere becomes too much to be stood by the women who assemble to sell rice-beer and they fly from the
[535] spot. Men dance the *Doṅger*, a dance meant for men only.

224 *Customs and Beliefs connected with Hunting*
787 While out for hunting, if the Santals see a pitcher full of water within the boundary of the village,

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or a man returning after washing clothes or a mongoose—all these are considered good omens auguring success in their excursion. On the contrary, bad omens are considered to be the sight of empty pitchers, men defecating, signs at which the Santals would give up the journey. 224 787

When men leave for the hunts (women never accompany them), the women of the house do not comb their hair, rub oil thereon, wash their clothes, or apply cow-dung on the floor. They believe that if they do so, evil may befall the hunters who being *putur jil* (flesh without the protection of hair like animals), as distinct from animals who have the natural protection of hair, are more liable to fall victims to wild animals like tigers and lions. 224 784

When the men are out hunting, the women spend an anxious time at home. Should a bird called "Pio" (Oriya *Peko*, Golden Oriole) come near a house and cry to the tune of "Peo cha-r...Peo-char-r-r," the women or the other members of the household left behind, will take it as a bad omen prognosticating that a serious misfortune has befallen the hunter who has joined the hunt from the house. 224 787

A ceremony for the welfare of the hunters is observed by the Santals when they assemble together and have a *jhumpar*. A suitable offering is promised to the deity Buru Boṅga and the village deities. 224 782

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224 782 In the alternative, the hunters may simply ask the Headman to invoke the Hill-god to look to the welfare of the tribe during the hunt.

224 834 784 As regards special rules to be observed before the hunting, it may be noted that men who will hunt, sleep separately from their wives and do not have sexual intercourse on the night previous to the hunting. On the day fixed for the excursion, the hunters do not apply oil on their heads or eat meat or fish or come in contact with women who have menstruated whose very touch is thought to defile the food or the clothes of the hunters.

224 [515] When the hunting party returns to the village, the feet of the hunters are washed with great delight by the women and oil is rubbed on the tired legs. All these conclude with the customary [576] salutations called *johor* and *do god*, the former being adopted by women who are superiors in age and relationship and the latter, being a prostration by the juniors.

224 593 533 539 We would like to conclude this short review with a folk-song which describes the agony of a Santal wife while her husband is out hunting:

Baba hak najòmcò.
Baba sòbòd na jòmcò.
Baba lota dak' dògo sepeindaramlet.
Bàhu nalòmraga, bàhu nalòmhòmòra,
Bàhu hòpòn badal go bàhu hòpòn menak'ko.

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778 824 Gosainera, a female deity. This Mowa tree is known as the Lady of the Grove. But it was noticed in the Jahirsthan both in Dumka and Godda area, that at the base of several other Sal trees there were stones which represented the Pukri and other Bongas.

342 787 825 [782] **The House :** Before constructing the house they test the site by tying a rooster on the site for five days, and if within these five days the cock loses its life they give up the place thinking it to be undesirable. If the rooster remains alive they begin the construction of the house after sacrificing a fowl to Marang Buru.

342 782 Before entering the new house the owner of the house brings a mug of water after bathing in a stream nearby and pours a little water in each room. In the room facing east the owner puts three cups of Sal leaves on the floor and pours "Handi" (rice beer) in those cups taking the name of Marang Buru and Pilchu Haram and utters the following words :—

"I have constructed the house by taking your names. See that every thing remains alright".

342 [351] [245] [784] Mango and jackfruit trees are planted in the adjoining field in the belief that prosperity will come. During the house ceremony widows and divorced women cannot enter the house.

The house and its contents : The house of the Santals is not of varied design and the plan of the main structure is always the same. In some can be found a courtyard in the centre, and rooms on two sides and mud walls on the other two sides. An average house of the Santals measures 15 to 18 feet in the length and 10 to 12 feet in width.

In the Daminikoh area and outside this area of the Santal Parganas two types of houses can be seen.

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HUNTING

Hunting:—In hunting the Santals are particularly 224
expert. Nothing pleases them so much as to be out after game with bows and arrows. As soon as they come to know that a party is out for hunting they give up their work and join the party. Hunting was one of the earliest methods of the Santals for the search of food. As except the reserved forests, the real forests [137]
have mostly disappeared, so game which they get by hunting is extremely poor. Consequently they are now compelled to adopt agriculture as their main source for collecting food. Still they celebrate the annual 224
hunting (Dehri hunting) excursion of a magico-religious 796
nature. The Dehri hunting, which is the most impor- 793
tant hunting of the Santals, takes place once a year [221]
in the month of Falgun (February and March). Dehri, [824]
their hunting priest carries a big branch of a Sal-tree (shorea robusta) with leaves and goes to the market, where people seeing him understand the purpose of his coming. As each leaf represents a day so they count them all and go out for hunting just after the number of days as indicated by the leaves of the branch. In this hunting expedition people of distant villages take part. The Dehri is responsible for the 224
hunt, i. e. (all goes well and no mishap occurs). By 796
divination he finds out as to who are threatened by 793
any danger during the hunt, and advises them to turn 782
back but they generally make him sacrifice fowls for [787]
them to Sin-Bonga to avert the impending calamity. He performs some ceremony and offers sacrifices to boongas

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of the forest where the hunt is to be held, to ensure success and safety. After performance of the ceremony the whole party enters the forest with bows and arrows, Pellet bows (Gorkhas), Slings (Gaduar), Tangha (Kopi), battle axes, dogs and Tamuka (drums) and Sakuas (Blowpipe made of buffalo horn) which they beat and blow furiously all through the hunt.

In the forest they stand side by side in a long line surrounding an area. Some remain ready with their weapons behind the big trees, the drums and blowpipes of horn they beat and blow furiously. The men nearest to the game shoot their arrows at them; when the animals being frightened run hither and thither, men shoot arrows, sling stones and tanghas at them. If the game elude the arrows and other weapons shot or hurled at them, the baffled hunts-men shout out and let their dogs run after them. The men, who stand in line, then entangle the game and the hunters who followed the game come up and kill them. Once when I was at Bokrabandh and Katahaldih I saw the Santal process of catching hares and ichneuman The Santals barricade a meadow, which is just by the side of a forest, with branches of trees and bamboos, only keeping open the side which is towards the forest. They keep an opening on one side where they fix a trap. They drive the hares from the jungle towards the place which is surrounded by the branches. The hares run towards the trap and fall into it. They kill ichneuman in the following way. The inchneuman remains under the ground and some dig holes, while others remain ready with Tanghis. As soon as it comes out they strike or throw Tanghis

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One of the strips protrudes, which serves as a handle. They hold the net in the water of a shallow stream and walk up stream, after a little distance, they raise it and catch the fish. In the other type, the net is tied in a circular bamboo frame—the Santals call it 'Kabhi-Jal'. They also use bow and arrow in catching fish. The arrow head here is furnished with three heads. Fishing hook is used to catch fish now-a-days.

The locality where the women catch fish is either below or between the rice-fields where there is standing water. In such places the Santals catch fish in the following way. The water is first laved out sufficiently to make it possible to reach the bottom with one's hand. They go into the water and move about to stir up the mud. The fish becomes confused and numb in the slushy water and are easily caught with the hand.

Catching fish by poisoning is not unknown to the Santals. The poison used for this purpose is got from the roots and bark of certain trees[1]. They powder them and throw them into the stagnant water of either pond or into a certain part of a stream, the fish are drugged and after some time they float on the surface and are caught.

Like hunting, the Santals have communal fishing in which people from neighbouring villages take part. The headman of the village, inside the boundary of which they want to catch fish, announces the date by a branch of a tree with leaves. On the appointed day they gather and after propitiating the bongas with fowls, they start for fishing.

1. Rev. Bodding collected the names of the trees which are as follows :- The roots of 'Kita' (Phoenix sanalis Roxb.). The bark of 'Kumbi' (Careya arborea Roxb.). The bark of a tree called 'Sakai Phal'.

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Bhakar are properly mixed, it is all put into the brewing pot generally in the evening. The contents in the pot are covered with a leaf plate to press the rice. And over it is put an earthen-ware lid. The brewing pot is then put aside in a place where people do not go often. The rice takes seven or eight days to ferment in winter whereas in summer four or five days. Cold water may be added until the pot is full. The beer looks milky and a little brownish in colour. It has a peculiar acid sweet smell, any one who has drunk a little may be detected by the smell from a considerable distance. 273

Before drinking the beer libations are made to Maran Buru the principal godling, and to the ancestors one after the other. It is done by pouring a little beer on to the floor inside the house. When the first brew is finished, fresh hot water is again poured on the rice, and this is called doja handi (second brew beer), it is not so strong as the first one. [782]

To prepare wine from Mowa[1] fruit, they place two earthen pots one above the other, the base of the second one is perforated and above it another earthen pot is placed in which water is poured. Below the surface of the second pot a bamboo pipe is fixed. In the first pot mowa fruits and water are put and left for four or five days. Then they boil the ingredients, when the steam rises into the second pot, and coming in contact with third pot, it becomes liquid and through the bamboo pipe it trickles out, and falls in a pot which is kept for this purpose. This liquid is the wine which they drink. But now-a-days the government does not permit them to distil liquor any more. The Santal traditions suggest that their first parents were taught to [773]

1 [Erratum: this should read "Mowa." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

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614 to the use of vermilion and may be due to the impor-
302 tant custom of smearing with vermilion on the occasion
184 of marriage and other auspicious ceremonies which once divided the Santals into two groups based on the use and non-use of vermilion. That this was the uppermost idea in the Santal's mind was forcibly impressed on me while taking their measurements and enquiring of their sub-septs; the majority came out with either Sada (white) or Nij (proper). Thus the sub-sept division not being exogamic is not so much a vital part of their social organization; rather it was a division
[174] due to culturtal difference. The possibilities are that once either the vermilion was a borrowed culture trait from outside or its use was given up by a section due to some internal reform movement or influence of some superior non-vermilion-using culture. It is more probable that the use of vermilion was more innate to them becuse the users are called the Nij or proper.
[585] Vermilion, it may be noted, is used by them only on
[171] the occasion of marriage. Among the Bengal Hindus vermilion is not only used in marriage but has to be always worn on the parted hair of the married women, lack of vermilion signifying widowhood. On the other hand in other parts of Hindu India more stress is laid on the use of flowers by the married women. Vermilion is not known in the primitive area of Assam. Thus it is probably a vital part of the culture of Chota Nagpur tribes.

Notes on Sub-septs

614
•782 THA-OR SUB-SEPT
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Whenever any ceremony (religious) occurs the members of this sub-sept sacrifice a goat or a pig in

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their houses, and they shut the doors tight and allow no smoke to escape.

MAL SUB-SEPT.

They may not utter the word Mal when engaged in any religious ceremony or when sitting on a panchayat to determine any tribal question.

JIHU SUB-SEPT

They may not kill or eat the Jihu or babbler bird, nor may they wear a particular sort of garland known as Jihu Mala from the resemblance which it bears to the babbler's eggs. The Jihu is said to have guided the ancestor of the sept to water when he was dying of thirst in the forest.

SANKH SUB-SEPT

They may not wear shell necklace or ornaments and are forbidden to eat, carry, cut, or use shell.

JUGI SUB-SEPT

They smear their foreheads with vermilion at the harvest festival and go round asking alms of rice. With the rice thus collected they make cakes which they offer to the gods.

MANJHIKHIL SUB-SEPT

The members of this sub-sept are descended from the Manjhi (headman of a village) , e., their ancestor was a Manjhi.

NAIKKHIL SUB-SEPT.

The members of this sub-sept claim descent from a village priest.

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inter alia he says, "We implore you to let us be with you to brew and drink beer, to fetch water, to pin leaves together on the day of marriage, the day of chhatiar, the day of cremation. We were like crows, we have become white like paddy birds. You, villagers, be our witnesses". This ends the formal part of the proceedings.

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The festival is concluded by further drinking and singing of chhatiar and other songs. It will be seen that there is no special or formal act done by the village people. They are invited for the occasion; the father (or his representative) implores the community to recognize the young ones as participators at the three great social occasions, and the people acknowledge this by drinking handi, the Santal mode of ratification. There is no kind of sacrifice at either janam or chacho chhatiar". [782]

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[114]

Adoption: Among the Santals to adopt a child is of rare occurrence. Dr. Campbell says they do not practise adoption. Rev. P.O. Bodding is of the opinion that adoption is present among the Santals. I have also heard of one or two instances of adoption in the Damin area of the Santhal Parganas.

If a man takes a second wife and this woman has a boy by a former husband, the man may adopt this boy. He proceeds in the following way: He first informs the village headman, then calls the nearest male relatives of the boy whose consent is necessary. If they agree they say so in the presence of the headman and the villagers of the village where the man, who will adopt the boy, lives. Then the male relatives

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597 of the boy renounce him and declare him henceforth to belong to the new father; it is also declared that the boy shall have no right of inheritance in the property of his natural father. When all this has been done the adopting father fixes a date for the formal adoption of the boy. The villagers of that village on that day behave as at Janam Chhatiar (name-giving ceremony of the Santal child). They shave and drink handi (rice beer). The usual procedure in a Janam Chhatiar is that the officiating midwife tells the assembled people the name of the new-born child; here she does not tell the name of the boy but the sept or sub-sept of the adopting father; henceforth that becomes the sept of the boy. Thereupon they leave the boy to eat the flesh of animals sacrificed to the tribal deities. Henceforward the boy becomes their own.

[302] [273] [614] [782]

684 627 **Bitlaha**: It means to outcast a Santal from society. This outcasting takes place by the order of the assembled members of the Panchayat. It is resorted to when a Santal woman indulges in sexual intercourse with either a diku (non-Santal) or with a person of the same sept. If any one commits such an offence the headman of the village in question calls his neighbouring colleagues together and informs them of the matter; if the people hold that the case is not proven, then those who started the rumour are severely punished. If it is proved, the assembly gives an order for outcasting and they proceed to carry it out the day after the annual hunt. The date of this Bitlaha is announced by a man in the market who carries a branch of a Sal tree (Shorea robusta) with leaves. The people in the market on seeing him understand the matter and count the leaves

[622] [689] [211] [824]

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departed ; although this Manjhisthan is build before the house of the headman of a village yet it seems that the spirits of all deceased villagers are commonly considered to congregate there.

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After death, the body is carried on a bedstead by the relatives and villagers who cover the body with a new shroud. When they reach a cross road some parched rice and cotton seeds are scattered about as a charm against the malignant spirits that might throw obstacles in the way. On that cross road they wait for an hour and the women and relations lament over the deceased. They carry the dead body to the bank of a streamlet nearby. The clothes, brass utensils and weapons of the departed are brought with the dead body. These things are sold at half price near the pyre. The pyre is prepared with the wood which is brought from the jungle nearby. Before placing the dead body on the pyre, the heir of the deceased with his face averted and walking backwards inserts a piece of grass between the lips of the dead man and places a silver coin in his hand. The dead body with the bedstead is placed on the funeral pyre and a small chip is taken off the collar-bone and deposited in a new pot and the heir then applies fire to the dead body by placing a piece of burning wood on the face of the corpse. Before setting fire to the body it is covered with a branch and four pieces of wood are put on it. A fowl is taken round the pyre thrice and is finally nailed to the south-west corner pole. After the heir has placed a piece of burning wood on the dead man's face, all the relatives and others present throw a log on the pyre and proceed to kindle it. The people sit at a

[782]

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771 782 776 Thus in religion proper the main attitude of Santal Society towards the supernatural, is one of reverential fear in the presence of certain mysterious supernatural powers and beings and dependence on and propitiation to and prayerful submission to them, and the result expected is the averting of the ill-will and securing the good will of the supernatural beings and good luck to man in crops and cattle, health and progeny.

771 776 782 [784] The Santal religion is also not a little concerned with ancestral and certain other disembodied souls and Nature-spirits and deities. The rites employed to establish relations with them are mainly supplications and prayers, offerings of sacrifices and the ceremonial sharing of sacrificial food besides certain special observances and taboos.

771 [754] [776] The Santal believe that the supernatural influence is not often inimical and evil. Their idea is that there is no possibility of malevolent influence being turned to a benevolent or good one, the only practical question for them is how to stop it and, in the case of witches, how to stop and punish it. Bongas and witches know how to do evil to people but more often than not also how to do them good.

771 829 [182] The Santal religion in its social aspect is essentially a tribal matter and has helped to strengthen the social unity and quicken the sense of social responsibility, and his concept of righteousness is bound up with his social or tribal consciousness. As the Santal Society has not yet got much beyond a limited tribal consciousness his conception of righteousness is not concerned with the essential or absolute standard of righteousness of things.

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courtyard there is an elevated place, square, or rectangular, the size generally being 1½'×1½'×1'. It is made of earth, and a *Tulsi* (Ocymum Sanctum L.) plant is planted in the centre of the mound over which a shed is erected. The shed is so large that it can easily accommodate 10 to 12 persons. The shed is erected by the unmarried disciples, married ones have nothing to do with the erection of the shed. The posts of this shed are of sal wood. In the centre of the shed a hen's egg and a chir sakum (a thin kind of iron wristlet or arm ornament) are kept for preventing witches from molesting them. The course lasts for four months. A woman cannot be an *ojha*. The first act of the *ojha* is what is called *Akhra rara* which means performing the opening ceremony, to ensure that all may go well and without any hindrance. The first evening the disciples bring along with them some *sindur* which is given to the *guru*. In five different places in the courtyard the *ojha* makes vermilion marks in the name of the following five different *bongas* :—

(1) Kamru guru (the reputed first teacher of *ojha* science to the Santals),

(2) Sin *Bonga* (the sun),

(3) Kali mai (the goddess Durga), [1] [^]

(4) Dibi mai (the goddess Durga),

(5) Ganga mai (the Ganges goddess).

The following invocation is offered to all of them by him after changing the names of the *Bongas* :

"Nokoe, Kamru guru (or, as the case may be, Serma Sin Thakur, etc.) amintikawam kana; nokoe cela korako

1 [Erratum: this should read "(the goddess Kali)." ^ Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x - Analyst]

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durup akana ; ado ninda nuta ko kijuka calakoko; tobe hadi bairi noko cela alo bare lagaoako ma alo jemon hoe husit, tatka birki hoyok ma ; nae napae bareko hijuk calak mako !" 756 782 539 776

(English Translation).

"Here you see, Kamru guru, I am making a mark for thee ; here, you see, disciples are sitting ; they will come and go at night in darkness ; then may malevolence and enmity not come in contact with these disciples ; may there be no spell of an evil eye, no sudden fright ; in perfect safety may they come and go."[1]

After having invoked the *bongas*, the *guru* utters the opening mantra which is as follows :

"Akhra khollom, makra kholo, pir khollo, ke khollom ? Guru khollo, guru gia; maekhollo khollom siri Kahri gia Kamru dohoe khollo".

(English Translation).

"I have opened the place of performance, I have opened the site of performance. I have set free the stools to sit on. Who has set free (or opened)? The *guru* has set free, by the guru's knowledge ; the mother (likely Kali) has set free ; I have opened by knowledge of Sri Kahri, by the grace of Kamru I have opened."[2]

When these preliminaries (opening ceremonies) have been gone through all is ready for the commencement of teaching. 756

[1]P. O. Bodding, op, cit., p. 47.

[2]Rev. P. O. Bodding, op. cit., p. 48.

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for his final touch. The *ojha* agrees if he thinks that he may be able to work independently. The *ojha* then demands the following things for the function : A new loin cloth, a goat, a pair of pigeons and some fowls and one to five rupees. 756

When the disciple makes these things ready the *ojha* with his wife goes to the house of the disciple and gives the *sid* there. The *guru* and *chela* first go and bathe. Coming back they clean some place in the courtyard with cowdung and the *ojha* here puts down a few small handfuls of *adwa* rice and makes some vermilion marks at each small heap of *adwa* rice (the number of heaps vary according to the number of sacrifices to be made). The loin cloth is then spread in the courtyard, the *ojha* takes his seat on it and performs the sacrifices ; the *chela* holds the goats, the fowls and the pigeons whilst the *guru* beheads them. In one of the corners of the loin cloth the money to be given to the *guru* is tied up and when the sacrifices are performed he takes the cloth and money. [782]

Sonum bongs or divination by oil and leaves : By this means the Santal *ojha* finds out the final cause or origin of disease and death. The *ojha* demands the following things from the person who engages the *ojha* : 755 [824]

(1) Sal tree leaves (Shorea robusta, Gartu).

(2) Mustard oil.

(3) A little water.

The *ojha* then squats down and jerks his head a couple of times and then he dips the index-finger of the right hand in the mustard oil and sprinkles a few drops towards the sun and then he draws a mark of oil with

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fixes the twig in each square in the ground.[1] He then takes out the twig from the figures and touches it with his forehead and destroys the figures drawn. He repeats the operation a couple of times. When saluting the twig, a disease is mentioned; if the hand trembles, it is the disease just then named. 755

By means of the above operation the *ojha* also finds out the *bonga* who has done this mischief.

The *ojha* with the handle end of a broom of Sirom (Andropogon Muricatus Retz., Straw) draws a circle on the earth by sitting on his haunches facing the East. In the centre of the circle the *ojha* puts the handle end of the broom down and then he salutes the broom by taking it out from the circle. Uttering the name of a *bonga*, he again puts the handle end of the broom in the centre of the circle and salutes it by raising it and at the same time utters the name of another *bonga*. In this way he repeats the operation several times until his hand holding the broom commences to tremble (not intentionally). Then he knows it is the *bonga* just named who is making the mischief.

Adwa chawla and bul mayam: By this the *ojha* propitiates the spirits of the outskirts of the village. The *ojha* calls for some *adwa chawla* (rice husked without having been boiled previously) and a little vermilion which he packs in a leaf of sal tree and instructs the patient to touch this with his left hand. The *ojha* with the "Karta" (Head man) of the house comes out of the house. Here the *ojha* pricks his body with a thorn 756 782

[1] If he used a broom he keeps this in a vertical position, handle down, for a little while.

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756 of jujube tree. The blood that comes out is smeared
782 on the rice; the *ojha* then scatters this rice on the ground as an offering to the *bongas* and at the same time invokes the *bongas*. Blood is given to satisfy a malevolent spirit. Seeing or tasting blood the *bongas* are very pleased and are quickly ready to listen. This offering of blood is called administering *bul mayam*; '*bul*' means to be drunk and '*mayam*' means blood.

The *ojha* then washes the parts where he has pricked himself and sprinkles a little water on his head.

755 After the *bul mayam* performance the *ojha* may take some other precautions. He calls for a *Rombro sim* (a thieving fowl). They bring him a *lisa sim* (a fowl with feathers reversed, its colour must be other than white). The *ojha* gets some charcoal and burnt clay (from the inside of a fireplace); he then grinds these two separately and puts temporarily aside wrapped up in two leaves. The *ojha* has brought with him a leaf of sal tree on which he has performed *Sunum bonga*. This he performs near the patient. He first draws a circle on the floor with a small bit of wood the diameter of which is about 12 inches. Inside this circle he makes a number of marks resembling those on the leaf; he then spits on the drawing within the circle and puts his left heel heavily down on it and finally with the left heel rubs out the marks he has drawn. He performs this operation several times. During this time the *ojha* remains silent. The object is to undo the deception of a possible witch. After this, he puts a leaf-plate on the ground, draws a circle on it and puts some burnt clay from the fireplace and

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755 Then the *ojha* takes the leaf-wrapped charcoal and *atko* and whatever else he has used for making figures, etc., and wraps these things in a leaf-plate. Taking the leaf plate and the fowl in his hand the *ojha* walks out of the house of the patient without casting his look backwards. The people inside the house now take the two cups and throw the water after the *ojha* and quickly close the door. Followed by some of the village men the *ojha* goes straight to the forest or to some other place away [782] from that quarter. Here he sacrifices the fowl in the name of some *bonga* of the outskirts offering an invocation. Some kill the fowl and eat it forthwith while others sacrifice the fowl by wringing the fowl's neck. In this case, however, they do not eat it but leave it on the spot with some pieces of stone placed over it. The last procedure is the most common. The *ojha* after having done all this returns to the house of the patient where he brings down oil and vermilion. He makes some mark in the courtyard with vermilion, at the same time making a vow of offering sacrifices to some special *bonga* of his when the patient recovers.

791 **The Jan guru or the Witch-Dirsetor**: The word *Jan* is not a Santal word; it is borrowed from a Hindi word meaning 'to know', *i.e.*, he is the man who knows by revelation. People pronounced by the *Jans* to be witches are taken as witches by the Santals. Whether they really find them out or the whole thing is a hoax, the Santals believe that they find them out.

791 When in a family a man suffers from a disease, and
787 none can cure him, the patient or his relatives decide to carry the matter to a *Jan*. They always go in a crowd to the *Jan*. They are, as a matter of course, a

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night before the men start for the annual tribal hunt with utterly obscene songs and practices.

5. The fifth class of spirits are the village deities, which are the following:

1. Jaher Era (female). 2. Gosain Era (female).
3. Truko Muruko (male). 4. Marang Buru (male).
5. Parganat (male).

The Santals worship the above deities periodically in the sacred grove.

6. There are spirits of the village boundary known as *Sima bongas*, and of the outskirt of the village known as *Bahra bongas*.

7. Next come tramp or stray spirits who are spirits of persons and children dying an unnatural death.

8. The spirit of the father-in-law's household, as is believed, sometime follows the bride to her new house which is known as *Naihar bonga*. As soon as a Santal is convinced that the *Naihar bonga* has come along he will either make yearly sacrifices to him, or, as there is some risk connected with it as one does not know the requirements of the foreign *bonga*, he will make arrangements to send him back at once, for by himself he will not return. If either is not done the consequences are disease and death in the house.

Another spirit that must be exercised[1] is *Kisar bonga*. The *Kisar bonga* is of a rather uncertain character. A man who has got such a *bonga* into his house will be wealthy through him as he steals from others and carries all to the house of his master, but if he is offended there is no end to the mischief he will make. If on his account disease is brought into a

1 [Erratum: this should read "exorcised." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x -- Analyst]

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family, the whole of it will be exterminated if the *Kiser bonga* is not effectually sent away from the house.

9. The last to be grouped are the spirits or rather mysterious powers residing in or connected with certain objects such as battle-axe (*Kapi Karan bonga* and *Bhalua Bijai bonga*. *Bhalu* is most likely a shortened form of *Bhalua Kapi*, the name of a common form of their battle-axe), and some weird natural objects such as an abnormally gnarled bamboo-shoot, tree-roots, some weird-looking fantastic-shaped hills or a roaring cataract, a waterfall or a tank-side. These spirits are not objects of worship nor do they receive sacrifices but are mischievous spirits who have to be scared away or exorcised by the *ojha* (spirit-doctor).

Santal religious ceremonies :

The Santals have no temple nor any shed for worship but they have a *Sthan* (place) known as *Jahirsthan* where they worship the village deities. The *Jahirsthan* is a place where religious ceremonies of the village are performed by the Santals. It is situated at the end of the village and it must be within the boundary of the village. It should consist of trees belonging to the primeval forest. A cluster of sal trees about twenty to twenty-five in number, is always required. Among these trees three are essential and they must stand in a row. At the base of each of these three trees a small stone is placed representing the deities *Jaherera*, *Truko Muruko*, *Marang-Buru*. The fourth is an Ashan tree which grows anywhere near those three sal trees, and a stone is put on its base representing the diety *Pargana Bonga*. The fifth and

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778 the last is a Mowah tree; on its foot a stone representing the deity *Gosain Era* is kept. This is the most important one and is known as Lady of the Grove.

796 247 In the Santal villages there is a succession of festivals throughout the year, nearly all connected with agricultural operations. The chief of these is the *Sohras* or *Banda parab* or the harvest festival, celebrated in the Bengali month Pous (i.e., at the beginning of the month of January) after the rice crop of the year has been harvested. This festival generally lasts for five days. Previously there was no fixed date, villagers of one locality performing this festival one day, others performing on some other day. But now-a-days the [178] [211] Deputy Commissioner of the Santal Parganas fixes the date for this festival, and this date is proclaimed by a man with a *sal* branch in his hand in every *hat*. Before this *parab*, Santal women buy large earthen vessels and replace old ones which they bought in the previous year. When the day has been fixed all houses prepare "handia" (rice beer) and people invite their relatives. [793] The night before the festival commences, the *Naike* [784] is religiously-abstinent for before any sacrifice the [834] sacrificer must not have relations with a woman and should sleep on the ground on a mat. At day break [624] the *goddet* goes round and collects sacrificial fowls from every house. In the middle of the forenoon the *Naike* goes near a tank together with some of the [793] village people, the *goddet* taking the fowls with him. [782] The *Naike* bathes and then sacrifices the fowls to the different *bongas* after which the villagers cook the fowls with rice and eat them, and also drink rice beer. After this the villagers go to *Kulimache* (i.e.,

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the meadow on the outskirts of the village), and there they draw rectangular compartments side by side, and in each compartment they put some adwa rice and in one compartment they put an egg of a hen. They then call the cowboys with the cattle and make the latter tread out the above figures. The cow which treads on and breaks the egg or simply smells it, is caught. They wash her feet, anoint the horns with oils and also smear vermilion on them. The idea is that the owner of the cow will have good luck. The cow is then lifted up and carried on the shoulder and put down before the *manjhi* (headman) whom the owner salutes and then all elderly men of the village. This the Santals call *Gots puja*.

On the second day in each house of the village within the cowshed the eldest member of the house performs a *puja*. In the centre of the cowshed he draws a circle and within it he puts adwa rice and paints vermilion and kills white and red fowls and sacrifices pig to *Marang Buru*, the household gods and their ancestors. All the men of the village go with their ploughyokes, battle-axes and knives to bathe. On that day no outsiders are allowed to enter the house. The Santals call this *Gora bonga puja*.

The third day they set wooden poles in the village street, a bundle of straw being tied on the top of the poles, put some flowers on the poles and also tie five pieces of bread made of powdered rice. Then a bull, after washing and smearing oil on its horns and painting vermilion on them, is tied to the pole. Then the bachelors and little boys of the village begin to drum, dance and scream so furiously that the animals becomes excited and begin to jump. To the horns of all the cows and buffaloes of the villages a piece of straw is

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796 [787] about the happenings of the coming year. The *Naike* then washes the *bongas* and throws the surplus water over them, whereupon the *bongas* jump up howling. Then they return home.

796 798 Next day they again go to the *Jaherathan*. When they see a fine *sal* tree in bloom, *Moreka* shoots an arrow into it, while *Marang Buru* climbs it and cuts down the flowering branches, *Jahar-era* receiving the flowers in a basket. On the road *Marang Buru* gathers mowah blossoms. In the *Jaherathan* the *bongas* are 796 798 again placed on a mat under the shed, and the *Naike*, 793 sitting in front of them, sacrifices the fowls, and places a bunch of flowers with a mowah flower before each *bonga*. [782] The *bongas* suck the blood of the fowls, whereupon the *Naike* washes their feet. *Jahar-era* doing the same to the *Naike*. The *Naike*, together with his wife who is now brought to the *Jaherathan* for the purpose, eats one of the fowls cooked with rice; some of the villagers eat the rest in the *Jaherathan*. After this all leave, except the *Naike* who remains alone in [782] the *Jaherathan*. The villagers then proceed to sacrifice fowls and pigs in their own houses, and to eat and drink. In the afternoon they go to the *Jaherathan* to bring the *Naike* back and the rest of the day is spent in general merry making. The women also enjoy to their heart's content.

241 796 The Santals perform several festivals before sowing seeds and also after reaping when they offer the first fruits to the village deities.

[778] **Erak-Puja**: This festival they perform before sowing seeds in the newly ploughed field. They celebrate it in

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the *Jaherasthan* in the month of Asadh (June-July). *Naike* and his assistant *Kudum Naike* perform the function. Five fowls are sacrificed in the *Jaherasthan*. After the function they cook these fowls and eat them. the heads of the fowls are taken by the *Naike* and *Kudum Naike*.

Herier Sim: The Santals hold this festival at the time of the sprouting of rice, which takes place in the month of Sraban (July-August). Fowls are sacrificed to all the tribal and village deities and prayers are offered for a bountiful harvest.

Janthar Puja (Nawai) This festival is held in the month of Agrahayan (November-December) in the *Jaherasthan* when the first gathering of the winter rice crop is offered Similarly the first gathering of the millets is offered in the sacred grove in the month of Bhadra (August-September) which the Santals call Irigrudli-nawai. The *Naike* reaps a little of the crop and offers to the village deities in the *Jaherasthan*, and ties a twig round the five trees of the *Jaherasthan* The *Naike* at the time of uttering prayer pours some milk on the offerings. Similar offerings are made by each householder of the village to the spirits of their ancestors.

Mak' More: This festival is observed by the Santals generally at intervals of five years or so in the *Jaherasthan* as a result of vows made at times of distress or epidemics. Fowls are sacrificed and a white goat is sacrificed in the name of the village community to *Mokroko*, one of the five deities of Santals which they worship in the *Jaherasthan*. The flesh of the sacrified

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796 animals is eaten by the men. The only woman who gets
782 a share is the wife of the priest. Drinking, dancing and singing are followed by young men and women of the village.

796 614 [184] **Jom Sim:** The *Jom Sim* is performed with many quaint ceremonies which differ somewhat for the different clans. That is why it is called clan festival. Mr. Culshaw recorded some stories from which it can be ascertained how it is connected with clan. "The 614 796 539 Karwak Hasdak tell the story of how long ago their ancestors were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and all the Hasdak were present. They had performed the sacrifices and everyone had been served with rice and meat, but some of the younger folk present felt that they had not been given enough to eat, so they killed a buffalo, or kada, became known as Karwar Hasdak". The Soren Santal relate "that in the very early days the ancestors of the Soren were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and some of the company began to prepare the food and cook it. In imitation of Brahmin cooks [179] they put on sacred threads and served all the people. From that time they became known as poita Soren".[1]

796 614 174 It is probably the oldest sacrifice the Santal have because it has more aboriginal features in it than any other sacrifice of theirs.

224 793 [221] [824] [211] **Dihri Hunting:** The *Dihri* hunting, which is the most important hunting of the Santals which takes place once a year in the month of Falgun (February and March). *Dihri*, their hunting priest carries a big branch of a *Sal* tree with leaves and goes to the market, where people

[1] W.J. Culshaw—Tribal heritage. 1949. pp. 74 and 72.

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seeing him understand the purpose of his coming. As each leaf represents a day so they count them all and go out for hunting after just the number of days as indicated by the leaves of the branch. In this hunting expedition people of distant villages take part. The *Dihri* is responsible for the hunt, i.e. (all goes well and no mishap occurs). By divination he finds out as to who are threatened by any danger during the hunt, and advises them to turn back but they generally make him sacrifice fowls for them to *Sin Bonga* to avert the impending calamity. He performs some ceremony and offers sacrifices to *bongas* of the forest where the hunt is to be held, to ensure success and safety in the following way:

The *Dihri* enters the forest and being naked, pricks his whole body except the joints, with the thorn of a bush. He then draws a small circle on the ground with powdered rice and puts some adwa rice mixed with the blood which comes out from his body and makes a vermilion mark inside the circle. The *Dihri* then gives a little rice to all the forest *bongas*. Others who are following him, then enter the forest with bows and arrows.

Mag-Sim: The Santals perform this festival in the month of Magh (January-February) when the jungle grass is mown; fowls are sacrificed to all the *bongas* by the village priest and his assistant. This festival marks the end of the Santal year. All the village officials go through the form of resigning their offices and the cultivators give up their lands. After a week the headman of the village says before all the villagers that he has changed his mind and would like to continue in the

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796 post, they generally accept it and this is followed by free drinks of handia (rice beer) and acclamations. All the other officials do the same and all other things remain the same as before.

796 177 I now propose to describe here some festivals which are believed to have been borrowed by the Santals from others. These are as follows :

Jatra Parab : The Santals have probably borrowed this from the *Bhuiyas*[1]. They perform this festival somewhere outside the village in the month of Magh (January-February). Pieces of stone are imbedded in raised mounds of earth and are painted with vermilion. The Naike then mixes some adwa rice, with milk and betel-nut together and offers this compound to the *bonga*. Then a pigeon and a goat are sacrificed and their blood poured out as an oblation. During the performance oracles are chanted by three or five persons in number, who sit close in a row on some adjacent spot, wag their heads to and fro all the time and work themselves into a prophetic frenzy. Any Santal, who consults them in a reverent manner, will at once get an answer to his questions whether as to his bodily ailments, the death of his cattle or the suspected presence of a witch in his village. For this at least four annas are thrown down at the feet of those five persons.

[782] [787]

The Chata Parba : This is a Hindu festival which takes place in the rainy season in the month of Bhadra and is observed by one sept, the Hasdah and by their Kamars (blacksmiths). The preliminary function of

[1] A Tribe of Chota Nagpur (Bihar).

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[417]

this festival resembles those of all the others but at the end of the offering a ceremony takes place. A wooden pole, about twelve cubits long, is erected and made to turn a half circle perpendicularly and horizontally. The pole is fastened on a loose but strong iron pivot which rests in hole made in two upright pieces of wood about six feet in height from the ground. On the top of this revolving pole is tied a small ornamented umbrella and this is caused to jerk first one way and then the other. The reaction of this pole is followed with shouts and other noisy demonstrations of delight, the people gather handfuls of dust and dirt and forthwith begin to pelt the umbrella. This novel mode of veneration is at the same time accompanied with dances both by males and females. Refreshments and handia (rice beer) are dealt out from sheds erected for the purpose and the whole assembled population regale themselves in the open air with it. The sacrifices in this festival are always eaten at home and not on the spot.

Pata Parab: This festival is performed by the Santals in the month of Bhadra in honour of their *Pata Bonga*. It is a corrupt form of the Hindu *Charak festival*, in which the Hindus offer puja to Lord Siva. During this time Santals do acrobatic acts in honour of their deity. On a vertical pole a revolving cross bar is fixed, on either end of which a man is held by an iron hook fastened to his clothing. The pair then are swung round and round very fast. Now-a-days instead of the iron hook a length of rope is used to hold the men in position. In this festival the same sacrifices are offered as at *Jatra Parab*.

[417] [526] [178] [782]

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and it is conducted according to the provision of the Indian Christian Marriage Act.

Material Culture. Material culture of the Santals of the Santal parganas has not much changed. They now wear cotton dhuties, shirts and gangees and the women have accepted cotton saris which are used by the Hindus. The well-to-do Christian Santals wear European dress, *i.e.* coats, pants, shirts, socks and shoes. The christian women wear Saris, blouses and petti coat according to the Hindu style.

Some of the younger men and women of the Christian community go out for employment in the towns and cities and when they come back they display their superior material culture, such as fountain pen, wristwatches and other luxury goods.

Rice beer is their important drink but the Christian missionaries make propaganda in favour of total abstinence, and the Christian Santals are gradually giving up this habit and tea is being substituted for it. Machine made cigarettes are slowly coming into use.

In the preparation of rice it seems they have copied something from the Bengali Hindus. The Santals like the Bengalis use boiled rice for their food and unboiled rice for offering to their tribal deities.

The indigenous husking machine of the Santals is mortar and pestle, but they also use husking lever (dhenki) in husking rice which they have copied from their Hindu neighbours.

The Santals, when they speak among themselves, use their own language. But with the 'Dikhus' in the Santal Parganas they speak in broken Hindi and

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preparing the cakes which the men take with them at the time of the hunt. The flowers have a high sugar content, and their most common use is in the distillation of spirits, the *paṛa* or brandy of the Santals. The work of distilling is carried on by one or two families in the village, and they sell not only to their fellow villagers, but they operate illegal liquor shops on market days. *Matkom* beer, a drink which is only slightly fermented, as it is prepared within twenty-four hours, is refreshing, but it is used chiefly for the purpose of counteracting the after-effects of a drinking bout.

The women prepare the rice beer which is brewed in all the homes. First they collect the roots that are used as fermenting agents from the forest. In this, as in most of their gathering activities, the women of the village work together. There is a certain ceremonial attached to the gathering of these roots. Parties sometimes consist of women from more than one village, and so a day for the expedition has to be fixed. The procedure suggests that this is regarded as the women's counterpart to the hunt. Before the wood is entered one of the older women invokes *Gōsāĕ* ("Lord", a general term used in addressing the spirits) and requests that they be led quickly to the places where they will find the desired plants. The first woman to light upon one falls on the ground, pretending to be drunk. These roots are known by the general name of *rāmu ran*, "medicine of medicines". It takes three days for the beer to mature or "cook". It cannot be stored, so it is brewed fresh for festival occasions and also in the majority of houses as often as the family can afford. *Haṇḍi*, or rice beer, occupies an important place in the ritual as well as in the social life of the tribe. It is essential for all libations to the spirits. A myth relates how the secret of brewing beer was imparted to the first human beings by the chief spirit of the Santals himself. It is therefore the indispensable Santal drink. It is extremely difficult for a Santal to understand not only how a person can live without beer, but why he should try to do so. The case of Pitam, who lived near Benachapra, illustrates this. He was a man of great influence because of his powers as a witch-finder. He had, however, abandoned some of his tribal ways, and, influenced by Vaishnava Hinduism, he had given up meat eating and the drinking of intoxicants. During the annual tribal council some of his enemies charged him with undermining Santal society, and one of the counts against him was that by abstaining from beer he was doing harm to the spirits.

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month. The date of the third is arranged while the first hunt is in progress, and it is announced by means of a *girq*. This is a method of reckoning dates or announcing future events. It may be used in connection with a hunt, but it is also used to announce a forthcoming marriage or a burial feast. It consists of a length of string in which a number of knots are tied, each knot representing one day. A number of *girq* are distributed to the surrounding villages during the weekly market, and they are kept by the headmen, who untie one of the knots each evening until one knot remains, when they know that the hunt takes place on the morrow.

Although the ritual meaning of the hunt has been obscured in the minds of the Santals, it is implicit in much that accompanies it. A hunt is the activity of the whole adult male population of the area. Women are not permitted to take part, but certain taboos must be observed by them while the men are away from home, to avert the lurking dangers of the forest. The prohibitions are similar to those enjoined on mourners and widows. No woman may wear flowers in her hair nor use the vermilion paint in the parting of her hair which is a sign of her married status. She should also leave off wearing the iron bangle which is another symbol of her marriage, and she must not bathe. At the present day, although the first two prohibitions are observed, there is some slackness about the others. But the main responsibility for placating the possibly malevolent influences residing in the forest rests with the *dihri*, or hunt priest. This is a special office, and the name is evidently the same as the Khond *dehuri* and the Ho *dihiri*, or priest. Among the Santals the *dihri* is a priest only at the time of the hunt, and he is appointed for the *pargana*. On the morning of the day when the hunt opens he performs the sacrifice of a brown hen on the edge of the forest which will be entered, and the tribal spirits are invoked to protect the men from wild beasts. He is encouraged by the spectators, who remind him that if any of them comes to harm they will hold him responsible. At times a certain amount of mimic hunting takes place in connection with the sacrifice, during which the *dihri* plays the part of the hunted animal.

The hunt lasts through the greater part of the day. The forest is surrounded by parties from different villages and the game gradually driven towards the centre. Within living memory the stock of game in most parts of the area has declined, and some of the hunts are now poorly attended for

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614 one of the original twelve *khût*. They are not allowed to have
614 spots made on them and they will not be vaccinated, but they
784 may be cicatrized; however, their daughters and sisters are not
[304] allowed to be tattooed until after they are married. The un-
[291] married men are not allowed to wear any garment made from
[342] jute. They must not plaster their houses with any other than
[531] white earth; and they may not draw any pictures on the walls
[532] except plantain trees and date palms or figures that look like
782 pictures of temples, drawn with three fingers only. They make
614 their sacrifice at the time of the *Sohrae*; this is performed in the
house, and they sacrifice a pig. One year it must be a male un-
castrated pig and the next year a female, and if for any reason
they cannot get hold of a pig they may sacrifice a black hen.
[825] They should sacrifice to their sub-clan spirit in the shelter of a
[178] white ant hill,[1] but in these days they bring some earth from the
ant hill into the house and sacrifice there."

614 In a Sarenga schoolboy's essay on the origin of his own clan,
773 he began by relating the creation of mankind and finally con-
[15] tinued: "All the Sorens were the soldiers of the Kisku, who were
the owners of the village at Campa Gar. The Marndi lived at
Cirunala, and between the two villages there flowed the Sitanala
river. They began to quarrel with each other because the people
of the two villages had to use the same river for bathing and for
drinking water. Now, since the Soren were the soldiers of the
Kisku, they are like the Gurkhas of Nepal. Just as the Gurkhas
are fierce and do not fear death, so too the Soren." So is virtue
614 inculcated by fostering pride in the clan. One of the sub-clans
[192] of the Soren is the Poita Soren. *Poita* is the word—as pro-
nounced by the Santals—for the sacred thread of the Brahmin.
[173] They relate that in the very early days the ancestors of the
Soren were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and some of the
company began to prepare the food and cook it. In imitation of
Brahmin cooks they put on sacred threads and served all the
people. From that time they became known as Poita Soren.
[782] When they sacrifice to their sub-clan spirit they sacrifice to him
alone, and the offering has to consist of a male uncastrated pig.
The rite is performed at sunrise. They may eat the flesh at any
time during that day and the following night, and if they are
unable to finish it they must bury it before the following sunrise

[171] [1] For references to the sanctity of white ant hills see *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, by W. Crooke, C.I.E., p. 380. The belief is widespread in India. "From early times the earth from an ant hill has been regarded as specially pure, representing 'the savour of the earth', and it was, and is, used in building altars."

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in the dung heap. Another Soren sub-clan is known briefly as the Sidup' Soren, and the name is connected with a custom followed when they are making their sub-clan sacrifice. The man squats on the ground in the courtyard of the house holding before him a sheaf of paddy. Meanwhile his wife squats nearby with her back to her husband. He passes the sheaf over his head to his wife, who receives it with her hands lifted above her head and takes it into the house. She may not perform this service if she has formerly been the wife of another man and is either a widow or has been divorced. The women of this sub-clan cannot wear a *campa*[1] flower in their hair.

There are two stories current concerning the origin of the Cilbinda Hàsdàk', or the Hàsdàk' who killed a kite. One of them states: "In the days of the early ancestors many very wonderful things used to happen. At that time kites were causing a great deal of trouble throughout the countryside. Every day they used to snatch away not only men's chickens but also the grown fowl, and in addition they used to take kids, young pigs and children. In this way they were the cause of much sorrow to men. Seeing this state of affairs, one of the Hàsdàk' brothers who was working out in the fields hid behind his clod-crusher and shot a kite through the hole in the middle, and from that time his family got the name." An even more suggestive version is more widely known. An old man belonging to this sub-clan told the story thus: "Formerly our ancestors fell into great difficulties. They were engaged in transplanting rice seedlings and had plucked them from the seedling beds, but there was no rain and so they could not proceed with the transplanting. Now, there was a kite perched in a tree adjoining the field. They shot it, and the blood moistened the land so that they were able to carry on with their work."

The claim to belong to the original sub-clan is made by many people belonging to various other divisions. Binu of Tantidanga made this claim for the sub-clan to which he belonged. He was a Jihu Hàsdàk' and he used to say: "They were the first of the lot." The name is derived from the fact that while their ancestors were hunting in the Khandarae forest they ate the flesh of the *jihu*[2] bird. Since that time they will never eat it, nor will they touch anything that is deep blue in colour, lest people say that they are touching the blue eggs of the jihu bird.

[1] *Ochna squarrosa*, L.

[2] There are two kinds of birds so named. The *Ilkonda jihu* is the Bengal Babbler, *Malacocercus terricolor*, and the *Jonum jihu* is the green Babbler, *Chalarius striatus*.

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they are touching the blue eggs of the *jihu* bird. The Hāsdāk' do not even touch a goose, and they will not take water from a tank in which geese or ducks are swimming at the time. Binu used to say that he had to perform four different sub-clan sacrifices. To two of the spirits pigs were sacrificed in the cowshed at the time of the *Sohrae*, to another spirit they sacrificed a goat in the house at the end of the *Sohrae*, and to the fourth they sacrificed a ram on the open land outside the village at the time of the Spring festival. The Kaṛwar Hāsdāk' tell the story of how long ago their ancestors were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and all the Hāsdāk' were present. They had performed the sacrifices and everyone had been served with rice and meat, but some of the younger folk present felt that they had not been given enough to eat, so they killed a buffalo and served that as well. The family of the one who slew the buffalo, or *kaḍa*, became known as Kaṛwar Hāsdāk'. They sacrifice a pig, a white hen and a brown hen at the time of the *Sohrae*; the rite is performed inside the house at sunset, and they must finish eating the flesh during the night, burying whatever is left over in the dung heap. The Hatibaṛi[1] Hāsdāk' sacrifice either a white hen or a ram to their sub-clan spirit. This should be done out in the open beside a white ant hill, but, like some others, they now bring a piece of earth from the ant hill into their cowshed. Like the Nij Maṛṛḍi, of whom this is also true, they may not be vaccinated, but their womenfolk may be tattooed.

The Jihu Hāsdāk' are not allowed to brand their cattle. There seems little reason to doubt the fact that most of the clans use distinctive marks in branding their cattle. Bodding has affirmed of the *ḍhera dag*, or cross, that although it is used as a mark of ownership of cattle "it is not restricted to any sept or sub-sept".[2] (The word "clan" has been adopted in this book in preference to "sept".) In the Bankura district, however, many of the branding marks are definitely associated with the clans, and the marks correspond to those recorded by Charulal Mukherjea in Mayurbhanj.[3] The marks printed on the opposite page have been noticed in Bankura.

The Guạ or Betel nut Hembrom constitute one of the most numerous of the Hembrom sub-clans. Of them it is said that "a few days after the ancestors had been divided into clans, one of the Hembrom was born at the foot of a betel nut tree. When he

[1] Literally "elephant house", but the name may refer to a locality.
[2] *Santali Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 272.
[3] Charulal Mukherjea, *The Santals*, p. 77.

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grew to manhood he became a very important person and his sons were known as Guạ Hembrom. From that time they gave up the chewing of the betel nut. The women may wear any kind of *sari* and they may wear shell bracelets. They do not eat eels. It is said that their ancestors were great traders, and once upon a time when they were going on a trading expedition they were halted by a flooded river. At that an eel ferried them over the river on his back, and since then the Guạ Hembrom will not eat eels. They sacrifice pigs at the *Sohrae*, also one white and one brown hen." Another member of this sub-clan was able to throw further light on the origin of the name: "We are Guạ Hembrom, and this is how we got our name. During the first wanderings, one day while the ancestors were out in the forest a child was born at the roadside. They wondered what they could find to tie

Rot Mạrndi - //

Hembrom - +

Nij Murmu - ⊻

Ṭika Murmu - ||

Sidup' Soren - ʔ

round the waist of the new-born child in place of the string. It was growing dark, so they quickly cut down the stem of a creeper, not knowing what it was, and bound it round his waist. Next morning they say that there was a betel nut on the end of the stem, and so the Guạ Hembrom began." The Nij Hembrom, like others already noted, perform their sub-clan sacrifices in the cowshed at the time of the *Sohrae*, with a piece of earth from a white-ant hill for the altar. It is set up in one of the corners. Another of their sacrifices is performed in the same month and has certain unusual features. No preparations may be made until after the sun has set and all the participants have already taken their usual evening meal, including the one who will perform the sacrifice. The rite is performed outside the village on a site that has been smoothed and plastered with cowdung. The person officiating draws a circle on the site with a paste made from flour and water. In it he first offers a red hen

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and then a ram. The blood is placed in a vessel and fixed on the ground, surrounded with small stones. Only men may eat the meat of the animals sacrificed. The girls of this sub-clan are not allowed to wear Bengali-style *saṛis* or shell bracelets at the time of their marriage, though they may do so after they are married. When the men of this sub-clan are bringing brides to their home they present them with a *haṣli*, the neck ring, made of brass.

A whole range of the sub-clans is known as *Sada*, or "white". They may represent a reforming element, for their characteristic is a revolt against the use of red vermilion paint. When the first ancestors of the Sada Hembrom, so it is said, were going to perform a sacrifice they thought that they had with them all that they needed, but when they reached the spot where the sacrifice was to take place it was discovered that they had left behind their supply of *sindur*, the vermilion-coloured earth that plays a large part in the Santal cult. When they saw this they completed the sacrifice without the *sindur*, and since then their descendants have been known as Sada Hembrom and they have continued to observe the custom so carelessly begun! In other ways, too, they have abjured the use of vermilion. They make no use of it in the marriage ceremonial, though once their daughters are married and have become members of other clans they may put vermilion in the parting of their hair. The cloth which is a part of the presents given at the time of marriages must be white without any border, and their womenfolk are limited to plain cloth throughout life. The same pattern of behaviour applies to all the Sada sub-clans. The Sada Hāsdāk', along with some other sub-clans, when they perform their sub-clan sacrifices, first of all model a scorpion out of paste made from flour and water and offer it before going on to offer a hen, then a pig, and lastly a goat. This particular sub-clan has to eat all the flesh of the animals sacrificed and they are not allowed to throw any part of it away.

Some of the Murmu sub-clans are restricted in the type of dwelling-house that they may build. The majority of Santal house roofs are constructed on what is known in Bengal as the "charchala" plan. This consists of a thatch that slopes up from each of the four walls of the house. The main beam is set well above the four walls, being smaller than the length of the house, with four corner beams fixed two at each end of the main beam and going down to the four corners of the house to form the first stage of the framework on which the thatch rests. Most of the Murmu, however, have to build up the two end walls so that

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the centre forms the apex of a triangle. The main beam rests on these walls with rafters sloping from it down to the other two walls. The resulting roof has only two thatches, sloping to the front and the back of the house respectively. The Gar or Fort Murmu are able to provide but little information about their origin, but they maintain their distinctive tradition in the matter of the sub-clan sacrifice. It is performed during the month October-November out in one of their own rice fields. The one sacrificing has to observe the customary abstinence of priests during the previous night, and the sacrifice takes place just after the sun has risen in the morning. A circle of flour paste is made on a spot levelled and cleaned for the purpose, and a larger circle of white stones is constructed round it. All who are going to partake of the flesh have to remain within this enclosure. First of all they sacrifice a black hen, which can be eaten by men only. Next they sacrifice a pig, the flesh of which may be eaten by the women as well. After this they sacrifice a white hen and finally a brown hen, and again it is only the men who may partake of these. The gathering and the attendant feasting last through the whole day, and they return to their houses at nightfall, leaving no food. They believe that some misfortune will fall on them if they have not finished eating while daylight lasts.

There is a sub-clan of the Ṭuḍu known as the Kāṛā or Blind Ṭuḍu which is accounted for in the following way: "The first Kāṛā Ṭuḍu placed a torn cloth behind the fireplace in his house. In the evening when his wife went to cook she found the cloth there and cooked the supper herbs wrapped up in it. Then the man who had put the cloth down came to look for it, and not seeing it behind the fireplace he asked his wife if she had seen it. 'Yes,' she replied, 'it must be the one in which I wrapped the supper herbs.' They raked out the fire and the ashes and saw that she had in fact burnt that cloth."

Many of the points that have been raised in this chapter cannot be understood apart from matters that are dealt with in subsequent chapters. The stories have been gathered together in this way in order to bring out the fact that in the clan system of the Santals and in the myths that form its background there is a key to the understanding of nearly everything that is distinctive in their way of life. The clan organization regulates their behaviour within the tribe and their dealings with the spirits. They accept its rule without question, and so long as they live in closely knit village communities this system, with its manifold implications, will continue to control their lives.

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a portion of land in recognition of his appointment, and land cannot easily pass out of the possession of a particular clan. The office therefore tends to remain in the family, for fresh lands are not obtainable after one or two generations have passed away.

The villagers recognize the priest's office, as they do those of the other dignitaries, by payment in return for services rendered. When one of the villagers is fined by the council, the priest receives his own share of the total sum. When game is killed in the hunt, the priest's share consists of a strip of flesh cut from the animal's backbone; it is formed into the shape of a cooking-place before it is handed over to him. He receives the heads of all the animals that are sacrificed by him on behalf of his fellow villagers. His duty is to make the offerings to the tribal spirits on behalf of the whole village at the time of the festivals. In order to prepare himself he has to separate himself from his fellows. Santals ordinarily sleep on string beds, but on the night before a sacrifice the priest sleeps on the floor, and he must abstain from sexual intercourse. On the morrow he has to fast until his work is done.

In addition to the priest, there is in every village a co-priest with special functions. This official is known as the *kudam nacke*. The word *kudam* refers to the area behind the dwelling-house. During village festivals, while the priest is making the main offerings, the *kudam nacke* sacrifices to the *pargana bonga*, the spirit who is regarded as the guardian or perhaps as the personification of the wider territorial unit into which groups of Santal villages are formed. It may be that this particular spirit needs the services of the co-priest because the *pargana bonga* was resident in the area before the villagers settled within its borders, while they brought the other spirits with them. The other function fulfilled by the *kudam nacke* reveals ideas which comprise perhaps a separate strata in the complex structure of Santal religion. During the festivals he offers drops of blood, which he produces by pricking his own arm with a thorn, to the boundary spirits, or the spirits of the outskirts of the forests. The name of this blood offering is *bul mayam*, *mayam* being the ordinary word for blood. The meaning of the term *bul* in this context is obscure, and Santals are unable to offer any explanation. *Bul* is a word connoting drunkenness; it can also be used as an adjective to describe an earthen pot that has become saturated with water, and it may refer to the saturation of the rice offering with the blood. In some incantations the phrase is coupled with one that refers to menstrual blood. The same

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practice of making an offering of his own blood is followed by the magician[1] when he is attempting to cure sickness. While the function of the priest is to deal with the tribal spirits, it would seem that his co-priest has to propitiate relatively unknown and fearful spirits; one might almost describe him as a kind of "minister for foreign affairs" in relation to the spirit world.

Santal worship centres round its sacred places, the most prominent of which is the *jaher*, the sacred grove usually to the west of the village. It consists of a number of tall, slim *sarjom* trees with perhaps one or two trees of other varieties, the whole having been left standing since the village was first founded. The surrounding forests have been cut down to form land for cultivation and for the homesteads, so the grove stands out from the landscape. Apart from festival occasions there is usually little to show the sacredness of the place, but the practice varies greatly from village to village. Two of the tallest trees standing side by side are thought to be the abodes of *Marañ Buru*, the national spirit of the Santals, and of his female consort *Jaher Budhi*, the Old Lady of the Sacred Grove. At the side of the former tree one sometimes discerns the blackened stones of the fireplace at which the village priest cooks – apart from the rest of the village—his share of the offerings. Other relics of festivals may be found, such as an ear of paddy still attached to its stalk, tied round one of the trees and left there since the time of the offering of first-fruits. Sometimes there are semi-permanent posts in the ground near the more sacred trees, two in front of the trees and two at the back, with cross-pieces joining them to form the framework on which a temporary thatch is placed during the festivals over the place where the sacrifices are performed. One of the trees is the abode of the "Five and Six", and near it a post standing in the ground represents the place of one *Laga Ṭhakur*, who acts as their watchman. Removed to a little distance is the place where the food of the villagers is cooked: the meals eaten here are communal. There are other trees at which the *kudam naeke* makes his blood offering to the boundary spirits, and these are indicated during the festivals by means of a piece of string. In some villages one finds indications of places at the edge of the grove at which one or other of the sub-clans performs its sacrifices. In some groves the space at the foot of the principal trees is tended carefully as befits a shrine. The ground is cleared and plastered regularly with cowdung and water, a cactus hedge is planted to

[1] The *ojha*. See Chapter 8, pp. 94 ff.

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In that condition they had for the first time experienced sexual intercourse and, realizing their nakedness, they had clothed themselves. He taught them that they must always offer beer to him when they invoked his name.

The Old Lady of the Sacred Grove, *Jaher Budhi*, is by contrast a shadowy person. Bodding reports[1] that her name is said to be *Kam sălgi*, but except for the fact that offerings are made to her along with those made to *Maraṅ Buru* at festivals, little is known about her. The same may be said of the "Five and Six", who are thought of as a family of five brothers and one sister. It is only to the "Five" that offerings are made, and hence they are also frequently referred to as the "Five." One sacrifice suffices for them all. The "Five" are greatly feared because they are likely to cause some swift calamity when they are displeased.

The *Mănjhi than*, the shrine of the spirits of the departed headmen, is the second of the sacred places in which the cult of the tribe is localized. The site is supposed to be fixed in much the same manner as that of the sacred grove. Local legends grow up round these shrines, and they exhibit many variations. Often they are situated somewhere near the centre of the village, to one side of the main street. In some instances the shrine consists of a raised mud platform over which there is a well-kept thatched roof supported on four corner posts and a central upright post about five feet high. In other cases it consists of a cleared space at the foot of a tree, and the roof of thatch is erected only at the times when sacrifices are offered. In some parts each departed headman is commemorated by a small stone which is placed in the shrine at the time of his death ceremonies, but in this area it is not possible to reckon the number of generations since the foundation of a village by the presence or absence of stones. Many of the villages have a history which extends back over more than six generations, and it appears that the stones which may have been placed in the past do not retain their sacredness over so long a period, and they have been removed. At the present time the immediate ancestors and also the original founder, revered as *Mănjhi haram*, are honoured by setting up the clay effigies of elephants or horses in their names. Even the site may be shifted under the influence of new ideas. Thus in the purely Santal village of Jamedia there is a shrine in the village street not far from the headman's house which has been in its present position for about fifteen years. The villagers referred to it as the *Mănjhi*

[1] Bodding, *Santali Dictionary*, Vol. III, p. 238.

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jaher rather than as the *Mañjhi than*. Until recently the shrine had been in another place beyond the present limits of the dwellings, and the villagers had found such a site very inconvenient. They were encouraged to change the site by the fact that in the street there grew an *arjun* tree, one of the sacred trees of Hinduism, and they felt they should do something to signalize its presence in the village. On a cleared space at the base of the tree there were two miniature wooden seats which were used by the spirits when they came, and there were also a clay horse and an elephant which had been in position there since the establishment of the shrine. The duty of tending these shrines, of sweeping the floor and plastering it with cowdung, falls upon an unmarried girl from the headman's house. The headman officiates as the priest at this shrine, presenting the offerings to his ancestors as the representative not only of the family but also of the living members of the village community. Offerings are made during the *Mokor*, the festival that closes the month of *Pus* in mid-January, and also during the Spring and Harvest festival seasons. Animals are sacrificed, but there is a significant difference in the methods of killing the animals offered in the sacred grove to the tribal spirits and those offered to the spirits of the ancestors. In the case of the former the animal is beheaded, but in the latter the animal is struck by a heavy implement on the back of the head so that the blood is not poured out. It does not seem possible to obtain any explanation of this from a Santal, apart from the all-embracing statement that "it is the custom". There is here another indication of the complexity of Santal religion; it would be difficult to fit all the facts into a scheme that seeks to find the origin of sacrifice in a single or simple cause.

The spirit world is not only the concern of the whole community or of each village but also of each family, a fact that finds embodiment in the cult surrounding the third sacred place of the Santals. This is a sacred enclosure inside each dwelling-house known as the *bhitar*, an Indo-Aryan word that means "within". This is formed by constructing a wall across the breadth of the main dwelling-house and so dividing the interior into two rooms with a mud partition between. The *bhitar* is the smaller of the two. The wall may be carried as high as the average height of a man, but often it is only about four feet high. The opening through which members of the family may pass from one room to the other is left vacant without a door. There are no sacred emblems kept in the *bhitar*,

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and in fact it is used extensively as a storeroom, particularly for stacking the bundles of reserve rice. Any man may pass through this opening, but no woman may do so unless she belongs to the family living there. The daughters of the house are debarred from going into the *bhitar* after they have married. After marriage a woman belongs to her husband's family, and this prohibition is one of several that are enforced with a view to ensuring that she shall not bring calamity on her husband's house by continuing to have dealings with the spirits of her father's home. She has to remove herself from their influence. Within the *bhitar* dwells the house spirit, and it is also visited by the ancestors of the family. There offerings of food and beer are made to the immediate ancestors. In certain instances sub-clan sacrifices are made in this inner room. The names of the spirits to whom the sub-clan sacrifices are made are kept secret. The knowledge of these names is handed down within each family from the father to the eldest son or other heir, and under no circumstances should it be imparted to others. An instance was reported of a man who was in deep distress because his father had died without his having had an opportunity of learning the name of the *abge*, as this spirit is called. He hoped to learn the name from one of his father's brothers, but this person also died before he could pass on the information. Shortly afterwards his dead uncle appeared to him in a dream and revealed the name, and he confirmed the correctness of the information by visiting yet another uncle who knew the secret. This story shows that the rules of silence are not too strictly observed within the family circle. Women are not allowed to learn the name, and in most cases they are excluded from participating in the sacrificial meal. The same prohibition applies to sons-in-law, though one of the Soren sub-clans is allowed to leave a portion of the food from the meal for their sons-in-law. When they summon them to eat, however, they address them as they would the household dogs, which emphasizes their separation from the family and from the sub-clan.

Some features of the Santal cult, as well as an indication of the ways in which it may develop, can be illustrated by a description of the shrine that stands on the outskirts of the village of Sarenga. This village was at first a Santal settlement, but it is now a place of nearly two thousand inhabitants, most of whom are Bengali Hindus. The present-day Santal inhabitants number barely one hundred, but amongst them are some who claim descent from the founders of the village, who lived,

so they say, nine generations ago.

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so they say, nine generations ago. One of the first settlers was one Lokhon Mañjhi. Just before he died he had been paying a visit to the *boiga than*, probably the sacred grove of that day. It occupied a site that is now taken by the landlord's rent-collecting office and has quite disappeared. He returned home, sat down on his string bed to have a smoke, then suddenly fell over and died. Almost immediately, and before the news of Lokhon's death had passed through the village, a young man in the courtyard of a house belonging to Lokhon's paternal aunt became possessed. He announced to the assembled company that he was Lokhon and that they must make a sacred place for him. They chose an old banyan tree to the north of the village. This tree has long since disappeared, but its place has been taken by an *atuak'* tree, which serves equally well. The fact that the village has become largely non-Santal means that the sanctity of this particular shrine is recognized by people belonging to many different castes, and its reputation has grown with the years. All the offerings there are made by the Santal priest in the village, a man who is descended from Lokhon. He is also the local Santal headman and combines the two offices in one person; such an arrangement is not unique and seems to have been adopted often in places where the Santals are living surrounded by other communities. He and his predecessors have adapted themselves to the new situation, and so this shrine, now utilized by many non-Santals, is still served by a Santal priest. Every market day people from the surrounding villages come to offer sacrifices, to ask a boon, or to leave their thank-offerings of money for blessings that have been granted. Some of the more unscrupulous of the local inhabitants defy the spirits by hanging around and picking up the coins left by the devout.

At the base of the tree is the shrine, formed by a raised earthen mound on which there are many burnt clay effigies of horses and elephants. In front of the mound a narrow path has been cleared for about eight feet, so that the tree is approached from the west, the direction in which all the effigies are facing. This path has been cleared through a jumbled heap of innumerable small clay animal effigies that have been left at the shrine by devotees in the past in the performance of their vows. Here there were many opportunities for watching the priest at work, and the chief impression that stands out is the dignity and reverence with which he performed his tasks. On a particular Thursday in 1941 he first of all cleared a small space at

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788 the base of the earthen mound and smeared it with his mixture of cowdung and water. He then took some vermilion paint from a leaf and mixed it with mustard oil in a small brass cup that he had brought for the purpose. This mixture he proceeded to smear on the foreheads of the larger animal effigies, and in doing so he used only the middle finger of his right hand. He then sprinkled some water over the effigies, and followed this by sprinkling some spice, of a variety known as *mithu*.[1] Up to this point all his actions had been performed in complete silence, and he was being watched intently by a small group of people who were waiting to make their offerings. He used the utmost deliberation and completed each part of the proceeding with great reverence. He next took up in his right hand a twig of the *sinjo*[2] tree and passed it in an anti-clockwise direction over the space that had been smeared with cowdung and laid it at the foot of the mound. Then he did an obeisance, bringing his right hand up to his forehead with the fingers lightly clenched, while the fingers of his left hand rested against his right forearm, the customary Santal salutation by an adult to his respected seniors. The process was repeated three times with three separate twigs, and as each twig was moved around he muttered his prayer. When it was over he told me that one had been for *Cando*, one for *Marak Burn*, and one for Lokhon Mañjhi.

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793 All was then ready for the offerings, of which on that particular day there were three. The first was a pigeon that had been brought by the mother of a sick child. He accepted it from the mother, taking hold of it by his right hand and taking care - he was squatting on the ground—not to turn his back on the shrine. He smeared the head of the pigeon with vermilion and oil, sprinkled it with some of the *mithu*, and then held it to feed on a little parched rice that he had placed on a leaf on the smeared space. He then handed the pigeon back to the woman who had brought it. The same process was repeated with a black hen and a small black goat that belonged to others who had been waiting. As each of them took back the dedicated animals they paid a small money fee to the priest, this varying from one to four pice. He then placed his sacrificial axe on the ground to his left with the sharp edge uppermost. This axe, known as the *tangi*, has a curved blade. He took hold of the pigeon once more and severed its head by passing it swiftly

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[1] *Trigonella Foenum-graecum*, Willd.
[2] The Bengali *Bel*, Aegle Marmelos, *Correa*.

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across the axe edge, then held it so that the blood should pour on to the parched rice, after which he flung away the body of the pigeon with his left hand and placed the severed head with the parched rice. The hen was sacrificed in exactly the same way. He then rose to his feet for the sacrifice of the goat. This was of necessity a more elaborate proceeding. A little way off from the shrine, to the south-west, there stood a "killing-post" with a cleft at its upper end. The goat's neck was forced into this cleft, and it was secured with rope. Its owner held the goat firmly, clasping its front legs and securing them by drawing them up and backward over the goat's back, and the priest severed the head with one quick stroke of the axe. Immediately and with great speed he took hold of both the head and the body, so that the blood might drop on to the parched rice. This completed the offerings for the day, and he gathered up the heads of the animals and his other possessions and took them away in a small basket.

This Sarenga shrine affords a good example of the way in which Hinduism can take over the customs and use the beliefs of those who are not, strictly speaking, within the fold, but in spite of the eclecticism here apparent there is a point beyond which the Santals of the village will not go in accommodating themselves to Hindu society. The *Mokor* festival at the end of *Pus* is celebrated by all the lower Hindu castes of the area as well as by the Santals, and at Sarenga it is accompanied by a gathering near this shrine, when many different people, including the Santals, take part in the stick dancing. On the other hand, in 1930 a proposal made by the local Hindus of influence roused great indignation and had to be abandoned. A Santal couple from the village who had previously been baptized were persuaded, as a result of a mission by an agent of the Arya Samaj, to renounce the Christian faith. It was proposed that they should undergo the *suddhi*, or purification ceremony, at the hands of the Arya missionary at Lokhon Manjhi's shrine. The Santals immediately announced that they would not recognize the validity of any such ceremony and that if it took place at their shrine they would cut down the tree and desecrate the shrine with their own hands. Many beliefs have grown up around the place. Binu of Tantidanga used to say that there were certainly times when the animals moved; he himself had twice seen them do so at the time of the *Pus* festival. He used to relate the local legend of how when Europeans had first tried to live at Sarenga they found

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it impossible to build a house. They were indigo planters, whose compound lay to the south of the shrine. Every time they tried to build the walls would crack, so in the end they offered a libation of their spirits to Lokhon Mąñjhi and all was well. In recent times a Bengali Christian has built himself a house between the old indigo compound, now the mission compound, and the shrine without so far having sŭffered any dire consequences, but Binu would stoutly affirm that he makes offering to Lokhon in secret!

The main intention of the Santal cult of sacrifice is to ensure the stability of the society and the wellbeing of its members. The usual burden of the prayers and invocations, the *bakhet*, is to threaten or cajole the spirits so that sickness may be kept away from the village and that the rains may not fail. The example of a prayer that has been quoted[1] throws light on the attitude of the worshipper and the language that he uses. The prayer is the accompaniment of certain material offerings, and a strong hope is expressed that *Marań Buru* will find the gifts adequate; there is, in fact, more than a suggestion that he ought to find them sufficient and do his duty in return. While material benefits are mainly sought,[2] this particular example reveals that Santal worshippers do sometimes look beyond the needs of the moment, for it is a prayer for a blessing of long life and happiness to be bestowed on a newly married couple. The language of the prayers is rhythmical; doublet words with rhyming endings and frequent repetition convey to the ear an effect similar to that given by rhymed verse. Often the prayers are spoken in colloquial Bengali, though the language in this case is Santali. The words themselves are not conceived of as "magical" in the sense that any alteration in their form or the omission of particular words would nullify the efficacy of the formula. There is obviously an element of magic in the ritual employed in sacrificing, but the prayers are uttered as accompaniment to the actions in order to draw the attention of the spirits to the latter. Most often the one who is uttering the prayer uses a loud and threatening tone of voice.

There is no individual approach to the *boingas*. Fellowship with them is maintained through sacrifices that are offered on

[1] See p. 67 above.

[2] Cf. E. O. James, *Comparative Religion*, 1938, p. 278: "In a primitive agricultural community requests for ethical and moral virtues could hardly be expected, since, as Cicero remarks, 'men call Jupiter greatest and best because he makes us not just or temperate or wise, but sound and healthy and rich and wealthy'." The citation is from *De Nat. Deorum*, III, 36, 87.

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behalf of a particular social unit, which is sometimes the whole village and sometimes as small as the family. Positively the goodwill of the *boŋgas* is retained by the observance of the due sacrifices, negatively by the observance of taboo rules. Many of the taboos operative in the daily life of the Santals can be directly traced to the necessity for safeguarding the interests of the *boŋgas*. The belief in the dangerous potentiality of women is reflected in the fact that all sacrifices are taboo for women in one sense or another. The fact that they may not eat the flesh of animals sacrificed to the *abge* has already been noted; they may not eat the flesh of any part of an animal sacrificed to *Maraŋ Buru*, nor the head of any animal killed in a sacrifice at all. Although they may help in the preparations for sacrifices performed in the house, they are kept away from participation in the sacred grove. No woman may climb any of the trees in the grove, nor may she be present when the sacrifices are made, nor eat of the flesh of any animal there offered. The one exception to this rule is that a portion of the flesh of sacrificed animals is reserved for the wife of the priest. Other taboos are related only indirectly to the belief in spirits. The code of behaviour between relatives is sanctioned by a belief that any infringement of its provisions will result in retaliation by the spirits, who cause such diseases as leprosy, or who will inflict dire punishment after death and make it impossible for funeral ceremonies to be duly carried out. Sometimes the retaliation acts swiftly, as in the case related by a Santal concerning an uncle. This relative was on a journey away from home. He stopped at a certain village to obtain a drink of beer, and in his haste, being exceedingly thirsty at the time, he omitted first of all to spill a few drops as a libation to *Maraŋ Buru* and his ancestors. This forgetfulness of a universal obligation was met apparently by almost immediate retribution. Soon after he had resumed his journey the man fell down—dead.

The *boŋgas* can be distinguished both from the Supreme Being and from various other classes of spirits by the fact that there is between them and the Santals some degree of personal relationship. Many of the *boŋgas* do not seem to have any very marked personal characteristics, but the Santal knows that in the normal course of events he will himself become a *boŋga* and will be dependent then for his happiness on those who come after him. Unless he dies in certain specified ways, once his funeral rites have been completed he will take his place among the ancestors, and his place in the hierarchy of the spirit world depends very much on his social status and correct behaviour in this one. The

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The most usual term for "God" is *Cando* or *Cando boinga*, and this reveals a connection between God and the sun. *Cando*, which means the Creator, also means the sun and "a month". When used in conjunction with *siñ*, meaning either "day" or "sun", *siñ-cando* means simply the sun; with the word *ninda*, "night", it means the moon. Occasionally the Santals talk of *Siñ boinga* as synonymous with *Cando boinga*. This association of ideas - it would be unwise to regard it as an identification—is shown in the practice adopted when an oath is taken. *Cando* is called on as a witness, and at the same time the man taking the oath raises his eyes to the sun. Again, when a Santal is being reinstated into the tribe, he is made to stand at the entrance to the village with a brass vessel full of water held up in his hands. The elders of the village approach him, whereupon he first performs a low obeisance in the direction of the sun, after which he speaks to the elders and makes open acknowledgment of his guilt and his determination to make amends. Following this, the oldest of the men from the village takes the brass vessel from the hands of the guilty person and bows in his turn in the direction of the sun.

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In spite of one or two apparent exceptions, it seems true that *Cando* cannot be appeased or influenced by sacrifices. The fact that the weekly sacrifice in the shrine of Lokhon Mañjhi at Sarenga includes one in honour of *Cando* illustrates the process by which modifications may appear in the general practice; it is not a typical shrine. It is said that a sacrifice is offered to *Siñ boinga* during the clan festival known as *Jom Sim*, which is hardly ever performed. For the most part, belief in a Supreme Being is not operative. He is frequently mentioned in conversation as the source of good and bad weather, and also of good and bad health; it is common to hear such expressions as "By the mercy of *Cando* we are well" and "If *Cando* has mercy we shall obtain good crops". By such means do Santals acknowledge that all their magic, their prayers and their hard work are an insufficient guarantee that they will attain their heart's desire and that God's ways are inscrutable.

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consequently overlap the sphere of "religion", which, however, covers experiences where the arts of magic do not reach, while magic also works independently in some situations. For the most part, the various approaches to the problems of living are simultaneously pursued, by individuals as well as by society. "Charms" are in almost universal use as a precaution against sickness; one finds the shell of a land tortoise hung in the cowshed to ward off smallpox, or cowrie shells worn as a protection against the evil eye, and amulets worn round the arm as a matter of routine and called *ran*, or medicine. A double attitude is most apparent in efforts to control the weather that plays so great a rôle in their life. In a period of great drought the Santals probably arrange for a special festival to be held, with sacrifices offered to the "Five". At the same time they busy themselves in other ways which are quite independent of the sacrifice. Unmarried girls plaster the dancing floor with cowdung, while the married women do the same to their own courtyards. An investigation is made as to whether any woman has tied a rope on any roof. It is taboo for women to climb on roofs in the ordinary way, but some of the cowsheds and outbuildings have low roofs on which it would be possible to tie the straw to a rafter without climbing up. If it transpires that any woman has done so, she is made to climb up on to the roof and undo her work, first removing her clothing. Other investigations are made too. It may be that someone has stored dried *matkom* on the floor in her house instead of placing it on a plank or on stones; or it may be that oil has been stored in a sealed pot, in which case the covering must be removed. Underlying all these activities is the conviction that the welfare of society and of the individual depends on establishing a balance between man, nature and the spirit world, and they witness to a faith that such a balance is possible of achievement.

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CHAPTER 9

FESTIVALS

The two great village festivals take place in the spring and after the harvest. The name of the former, *Baha*, means "Flower festival". It is held after the full moon in the month of *Phalgun* (February-March). The hot season is about to begin, sap is rising in the trees, and the *sarjom* is resplendent with blossom and tender green leaves. Until the festival has taken place the women do not gather the *matkom* blossoms which provide them with both food and drink. It is held on different days in different villages so that the celebrations can be accompanied by a round of visits to relatives. The opening day of all festivals is a day of purification, known as "bathing day". On this day at the time of the Spring festival two temporary sheds are put up in the sacred grove and the young men carry out a hunt in the woods near the village. The priest completes his preparations and bathes certain articles in the waters of the village tank. At sunset three hens are taken to his house by the villagers, who remain there to dance. Three of the young men become spirit-possessed. One impersonates the "Five", another the Old Lady of the Sacred Grove, and the third takes the part of *Marak Buru*; they seize the implements which the priest has purified earlier in the day and make play with them. The priest receives them with respect; he washes their legs and, addressing the spirits, he asks for good fortune during the coming year. When this is over the young men are recalled to their senses by a series of sharp taps on their backs. Dancing is continued throughout the night in the village street just outside the priest's house.

In the early afternoon of the following day the priest is accompanied by the villagers in a singing procession to the sacred grove. On arrival there the same young men are again possessed and run away across the fields, being chased and brought back by the rest of the young men. The priest now assumes an attitude of great humility towards them. He receives them with a cloth tied round his neck in token of the submission of the village to the spirits. The hens are sacrificed and cooked in a hash with rice. The priest and his wife partake of one and the men of the village consume the rest of the food, after which everyone returns home except the priest. He has to remain in the grove until the young men return to escort him. He is then taken to every house in turn and received with great honour. His feet are

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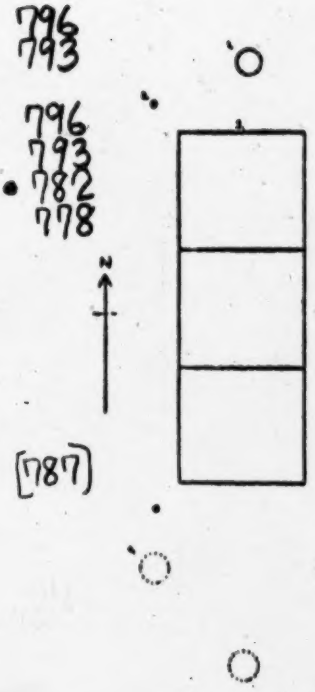

brass water-pot, while his wife carried the earthen pot of water brought for good fortune. Youths and maidens conducted him to the grove, dancing as they went, and there he began to make the sacrifice. The youths and the maidens danced in the grove, the young men singing only the Flower dance songs, and while the dancing went on the priest proceeded with his work. With the flour he made the circles and the squares. A hen was offered in each of the circles; the brown hen was slain in the Moslem[1] fashion, while the other two had their necks cut. Again each of the spirits took possession of a man, and they sucked the blood of the slain birds. One circle was for *Marak Buru*, one for the Old Lady of the Grove, and one for *Mañjhi haram*. In the squares the priest sacrificed to the village spirits, and as we had brought many hens it was not possible to offer them all, so some were killed by knocking their heads on the ground. When it was all over, the priest cooked the heads of the first three hens with flour, making cakes of them, and then ate them and drank beer. This is called 'lifting the head'. Then the folk in the village who offer to the 'Five' took flowers from the trees of the grove, returned to their own houses and made mounds of the flowers. Near these mounds they offered either hens or goats. (Some of those who worship the 'Five' invite all their relatives at this time and make the sacrifice in the grove.) Meanwhile the priest drank beer and cooked a hash of rice with the brown hen.

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Late in the afternoon the young men went to receive the priest back into the village. They went dancing to the grove and danced round the priest. Again the spirits took possession of the three young men, who danced with the others. The Old Lady again wore the bangles and the necklace and carried the

[1] This is Babulal's word. The offering to *Mañjhi haram* is strangled and not beheaded.

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However, they could not find Ote and Bole; they searched everywhere, but they saw no tracks but the tracks of the *nilgae* and the wild buffalo. Nowadays the Santals say that the Ote and Bole who were then lost have become the ancestors of the 'sahibs'. One reason why we say this is that often when we are beginning to dance and at the commencement of songs someone calls out these words: 'Look, friends, the white hare has run away.'[1] This saying is the signal to begin the dance. The word 'sahib' is amongst us for a long time; in many ways our customs are the same."

This rather obscure piece of reasoning is in fact widely current among the Santals, at any rate among those who are unfamiliar with the origin of the word "sahib" and its currency in India during Moslem times. "White hare" is a term often applied to Englishmen. On one occasion I emerged rather suddenly from the waiting-room at a wayside station on to the platform near to where a group of Santal women were unloading a railway wagon. Unaware that I might understand their conversation, one of the women remarked, "The white hare has just come out of its hole!" greatly to the amusement of her companions. Babulal relates at this point how the brothers were met in the forest by *Marañ Buru* and led by him to the foot of various trees.[2] Babulal places the story in Moslem times. He makes the following remarks about *Marañ Buru* and his actions: "*Marañ Buru* deceived them so that when they wanted to offer sacrifices to *Thakur* they should do it in his name, afterwards to the Old Lady of the Grove, and then to the 'Five and Six'. In former days he used to be called *Lita godet'*, *Lita* the bailiff. *Marañ Buru* became the guardian of the ancestors. He used to take them out hunting and taught them how to kill iguanas, water-snakes, squirrels, mongoose and hares. On such days as they caught nothing in the chase he used to show them the dead cattle at the end of the village street, and would say to them: 'It is quite all right for us to eat these too; these are white deer.' And so we began to eat all these things."

He offers some more information about the Flower festival in his narrative: "In the prayer at the time of the Flower sacrifice we must use these words in addressing the spirits: 'If you are not pleased with the offering we shall dishonour your mother.' We consider that the spirits will listen to us if we use these words. We also say that if we urinate in a standing

[1] Another form of this saying is given in Chapter 6, p. 67.
[2] See Chapter 6, p. 66.

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We also say that if we urinate in a standing position the Flower spirits will be pleased. For this reason, if anyone sees us urinating in a standing position and scolds us for it we reply: 'We are making offerings to the Flower spirits!' The Flower festival is for flowers and fruits what the offering of new rice is for rice. Until the priest has placed flowers in the hair of the women and eaten some of the *matkom*, no one will wear flowers or eat the *matkom*. From the new year until after the festival the priest has to live very carefully. He eats nothing in other people's houses, because others may have been on a visit to villages where the festival has already taken place and then he might eat something that is forbidden. One of the songs that is sung when the priest is being escorted to the grove and again back to his house refers to the fact that the Dol Jatra festival of the Hindus has already taken place.[1]

'The Dol is over now, maidens, the *Pata*[2] comes next;
You must buy shields, maidens, for yourselves.

In the maidens' pubic region is the black bee's honeycomb;
You must buy shields, maidens, for yourselves.' "[3]

The second great festival is celebrated when all the harvest has been gathered in and there is plenty of food. The Santals say that for one month after the Harvest festival, known as the *Sohrae*, they eat rice without measuring it. Although it may be held at any time during the period between the dark night in October-November and the middle of January, in most of the villages of the area it is now celebrated at the earliest possible date, when Hindus are celebrating the Kali Puja. One reason is to enable those who are migrating for work to share in it before they depart, and some of the villagers distinguish between this fixed festival and a true *Sohrae* fixed in the traditional manner. In a bad year a Santal remarked: "This year we shall have no *Sohrae*. There has been no harvest, so what would we eat and how could we invite our friends?" The words were spoken while the village in question was actually celebrating the festival at Kali Puja time. Further, the celebration of Kali Puja amongst the surrounding cultivator castes, and especially the Bauri, has many features in common with the Santal cult, particularly with reference to cattle worship, and this factor has undoubtedly led the Santals to approximate the time of their celebrations to that of their neighbours.

[1] See Chapter 7, p. 90.
[2] See Appendix B, No. 20.
[3] The hook-swinging festival.

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On the evening before the appointed day the village bailiff delivers the sacrificial hens, two white hens and one brown, to the priest's house. The priest observes his customary abstinence during that night, sleeping on the bare floor. Next morning the bailiff makes a collection of one hen from each house in the village, together with rice, salt and the various spices that are needed to cook a curry. It is the duty of the priest's wife to grind the flour that will be needed for "cakes"; his sister may perform this work only if she is unmarried. In the morning the priest constructs the sacred squares and circles on a piece of ground previously plastered with cowdung. The sacrifices are performed at noon, and these are in some cases offered in the sacred grove, but in some villages they are offered by the side of a stream or on the bank of one of the artificial lakes that abound. The sacred place is made from north to south, as in the case of the Flower festival, and the procedure is the same. First of all rice is sprinkled in the enclosures and some vermilion is placed on the rice. The birds are fed on the rice, water is sprinkled over them, and vermilion is smeared on their heads, their wings and their legs. When the sacrifice is complete, the priest eats the flesh of the heads, while the men of the village feast on a hash made from the rest of the flesh, and drink and sing.

The distinctive feature of the sacrifice is that, before the hens are offered, an egg is placed standing upright on a small pile of rice in one of the squares, and all the herdboys of the village are summoned to bring the cattle. The priest places vermilion on their goad sticks, and they drive their cattle across the enclosure in which the egg is standing until one of the cattle tramples upon and breaks the egg. This is the signal for an outburst of cheering and excitement. The cow or bull is garlanded and anointed with vermilion on its horns and its head. Sometimes the boy is carried shoulder high to the village headman, before whom he makes a deep obeisance, afterwards saluting the other men of the village. When the villagers return to the houses in the late afternoon they are supplied with beer in the priest's house, after which they visit the headman's house for the same purpose, and so on from one house to another. It is at this time that the youths and young women visit the home of the *jogmāñjhi* and request him to turn a blind eye to their doings for the duration of the festival. The whole period is characterized by its freedom from traditional morality. The rules of avoidance are treated lightly, and many liberties are taken with members of the opposite sex.

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of the opposite sex. On the first night the young people go through the village conducting the ceremony known as "waking the cattle". There is much drumming and dancing outside each of the cowsheds, and the cattle are feasted and decorated; small white circles made of flour are painted on their hides, vermilion is placed on their horns and heads. When all the cattle in the village have been "wakened", the young men go round once more for the "blessing" of the cattle. They are garlanded and fed with sweetmeats, and the blessing is pronounced as a hope that they will be protected from the dangers of disease and witchcraft, from thieves and the depredations of wild animals during the coming year. This "blessing" is pronounced by the women.

Other ceremonies are performed on the following days. The whole celebration may last either for three or for five days. At one time during the festival the young men of the village lock the bailiff in his home, and he is not allowed to come out until he has promised to treat them all to a drink of beer. During the second day of the festival the sub-clans perform the sacrifices to their *abge* spirits. These sacrifices are also preceded by ceremonial bathing on the part of the members of the households concerned, and the men take to the waterside their hunting implements, bows and arrows, axes and spears. The head of the house officiates, and the sacrificial animals are set apart in the same way as for the village sacrifices, having vermilion in oil placed on their heads, their shoulders and their hoofs. The flesh of the animals is, however, cooked separately from the rice with which it is eaten. On the second day also the cattle are baited. A bull is tied to a post, and the group of men who gather round it begin to infuriate the beast by persistent drumming. One or two of the men at a time, holding before them the skin of a dead animal, engage in mock combat with the bull, leaping at it and inciting it to plunge at them with its horns. The pastime continues for several hours and sometimes results in accidents. It is a happy season for the herdboys; they receive presents of cloth and are well fed by their masters. On the last night of the festival the unmarried men and girls sleep at the house of the *jogmañjhi* in token of the fact that their period of licence is at an end.

The remaining festivals of the Santal year do not make the same stir throughout the countryside. *Mokor* is the name used in the area by Santals and non-Santals alike for the festival which takes place in mid-January. In some places it is called

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the *Sakrat*. At this time offerings are made to the ancestors in each house, and the celebration is accompanied by a display of stick dancing, which has replaced the former "sword and shield" dance. At the end of the following month the *Mag Sim*, the hen at the end of the month of *Mag*, is offered. In former times the village officials used to resign at this time and could be either replaced or reappointed, but the only relic of the old practice that has survived is that the headman has to treat the whole village to beer. Contracts with servants are renewed during the festival, and they receive the cloth that is always a part of the contract. In connection with rice cultivation there is the *Erok' Sim*, the hen that is offered at the time of sowing, and *Nawai*, when the first fruits of the first rice crop are offered in the sacred grove. Before this takes place the new rice must not be eaten. The village priest cuts the first handful of the crop and offers some at the foot of each of the chief trees. A sprig is also tied round the trunk of the trees and remains there. While the prayer is being said, milk is poured on the offering. After the priest has done his part, similar offerings are made in every house to the house spirits and the ancestors, the rice being taken from the crops belonging to the family. In varying degrees the Santals share in some of the festivals and practices of the low-caste cultivators around them. In the early monsoon days, during the period of *Rohini*, which is an auspicious time for sowing rice, they make a mark round their houses with cowdung as a protection against snakes. The snake goddess festival occurs in late August, and although its observance is not widespread among the Santals there are some local celebrations, especially when there is an *ojha* in the village. The *ojhas* all keep this festival, and others go to them at this time to ask for medicines against snakebite. Some Hindu festivals, as we have seen, furnish the occasion for large gatherings of Santals. At Sarenga, in addition to the Lakshmi Puja, a somewhat smaller gathering takes place during the hot weather in connection with the celebration of the Siva Gajon at a local temple. At this time the Charak, or hook-swinging festival, otherwise known as the *Pata*, takes place. The practice has almost died out within the last fifteen years. It had been prohibited by the government, but as long as the old generation, which was accustomed to the practice, remained it continued with gradually diminishing fervour. The Santals gather now to sing and to dance. They also join the throngs of pilgrims, sightseers and traders who collect at the Bogri *mela*, or fair,

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some thirty miles from Sarenga. This fair, which is one of the most famous in Western Bengal, takes place at the time of the Dol Jatra near a temple dedicated to Krishna. The last day of the *mela* is chiefly renowned for the fact that on that day there is a great concourse of Santals for dancing.

One festival which is shared with tribes living right across Central India[1] is the *Karam*. The fact that it is not peculiar to them is known to the Santals, and one informant once told me that they must have borrowed it from the Mahato. He had seen that the Mahato celebrated it and knew of the special relationship between the Mahato and his own people. Many of the songs contain references to Ram and Lokhon, heroes of the *Ramayana*. The festival is rather difficult to characterize, for its celebration takes different forms and arises from different causes. It is connected in all cases with the desire for prosperity, but it may be either a public or a private celebration. The *karam* is a tree[2] that is associated with the god Krishna in the *Vishnu Purana*. When a shoot of this tree is found growing in the land round a house or springing from the roof thatch, the head of that house is responsible for instituting an annual celebration of the festival. The fact that while it is celebrated annually in a great many villages it is not found invariably is perhaps accounted for by its accidental origin. The festival is also associated with certain other definite events. In some cases the leading celebrant is the local *ojha*, who holds a *Karam* festival at the beginning of the month of *Dāsāē* and before he sends out his disciples on their annual begging expedition. Sometimes it is celebrated in connection with the appointment of the new headman of a village, and sometimes in connection with the death ceremonies of a man of substance. Sometimes it is associated with the *Mak' Mōṛē*, an occasional sacrifice to the "Five". These spirits are peculiarly liable to become offended, and offerings are made to them to avert their wrath, which takes the form of inflicting a poor harvest or an epidemic. Whatever the occasion may be, the celebration of the *Karam* is regarded as an insurance either on behalf of a particular family or on behalf of the whole village. It may be either a way of enhancing good fortune or of warding off evil. Where in the area it has become an annual festival it is held at the full moon in the month of *San* (July-August). At sunset the un-

[1] References to Central India are to be found in *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, by V. Elwin, Oxford University Press, pp. 3–11.

[2] *Adinia cordifolia*, Hook., f. and B.

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CHAPTER 10

BIRTH AND INITIATION

858 THE birth of a child is an occasion for rejoicing, and the event is announced by saying: "The new relation has arrived." Children are spoken of as the gift of *Cando*, which indicates that they are considered to be assets to the family. It is true that boys are rather more welcome than girls; every family desires that the first child should be a boy who will ensure the survival of that [428] particular family within the clan. A boy can inherit his father's lands, and one day he will be required to assist at his father's funeral ceremonies and perpetuate the worship of his own ancestors. Girls are welcomed, though not to the same degree. Through their marriages they will in due course extend the range of the family's relationships, but they bring but a small economic return to their parents, and the bride price received at marriage is not comparable to the expense of bringing them to maturity. Where a family consists of both boys and girls in equal proportion the girls are well treated, and when later on they go to other homes their places will be filled by daughters-in-law. When, on the other hand, a woman gives birth to a succession of daughters she is likely to feel the displeasure of her husband's relations. A third or fourth daughter born into a home where the husband's mother reigns supreme does not enjoy much prospect of survival. Children are valued from the first because of their potential working ability. A villager, on hearing that a birth has taken place, responds at once with the question: "What is it? Does it carry on the shoulder (a boy) or does it carry on the head (a girl)?" Or he may say: "Is it a hunter or is it a water carrier?"[1]

842 There are Hindu shrines in the area to which Santal women [798] resort along with others when other means of securing the birth [796] of a longed-for child have proved of no avail. A spirit who can grant the boon of children resides near the village of Raniband at the summit of a hill which rises abruptly from the plain and [782] is the highest point in the whole area. Cases have been reported [595] of Santal man and wife making the climb together in order to present an offering. In most cases, however, the husband preserves an air of indifference; if his wife fails to bear a child he is

[195] [192] [1] Another way of referring to the sex of children, though not at the time of birth, is for a parent to say: "I have three *iri* and three *erha*", which signifies three boys and three girls. *Iri* is a cultivated millet (*Panicum crusgalli*, L.) and *erha* is a cultivated grain (*Setaria italica*, Kunth).

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They are all the more important because some of them are things that a boy and girl would never do publicly together."[1] Among the Santals many of the symbolic acts cannot be truly interpreted apart from their relation to the unseen world. The invocations used in addressing the spirits at the time of marriage come as near to true prayer as any used at other times.[2] Before the wedding party leaves the bridegroom's village for the home of the bride, the bridegroom's father provides a hen for the village priest, who offers it in the sacred grove. He prays: "We offer to you a hen because of the marriage booth. Accept it, enjoy it and grow big. Now we are about to go as a marriage party to such and such a village. Guard us so that on the way through the forest there may be no sudden fright, no tripping, no tumbling, no spells, no enchantments. Clear the way for us to right and to left, O father spirits. There we shall eat and drink. May we suffer no stomach pains, no head pains. Guard us also so that there be no quarrels, no bickerings, no divisions, no disturbances, no ruin, no spoiling between relations."

Before the marriage, booths are erected in the courtyards of both homes, and all the villagers assist in the work. Straw ropes are strung from side to side in the village street with mango leaves inserted through the strands, and the courtyards are decorated in the same manner. The posts of the booths are made with branches of the *matkom* tree. In the floor a hole is dug in which some fresh turmeric mixed with sun-dried rice, five cowrie shells and three leaves of *dhubi*[3] grass are buried. These are covered in and then the whole floor is plastered with cowdung The young men who build the booth are feasted and provided with beer. On the day before setting out for the bride's village the bridegroom's party go to the village bathing place for the "water marriage". One of the young men digs a small hole at the water side into which the water can seep and three arrows are planted round the hole. Vermilion is placed on the arrows, while at their base are placed some cowrie shells and a hen's egg. One of the women shoots at the water with an arrow, while another strikes it with a "sword", generally a stick. Then libations of beer are poured out to *Marak Buru* and the ancestors before all present partake. Finally, water is drawn in pots and taken to the home. Again when they reach the courtyard another hole is dug, the arrows are placed round it and the water

[1] V. Elwin and S. Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, p. 203.
[2] One example has been quoted in Chapter 6, p. 67.
[3] *Cynodon dactylon*, Pers. Reg.

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the parting of her hair. Next, all the articles required for the cremation are collected. These include a spade, an axe, parched rice, an old winnowing fan, a water pot, a handful of straw from the roof of the house, cotton seeds, a small earthen pot containing turmeric paste, flour made from sun-dried rice, and a hen. The body is carried out from the courtyard feet first on a string bed that is borne by four men. When the end of the village street is reached the bed is set down for a minute and those who wish to do so anoint the body once more for the last time. The women folk do not accompany the body beyond the confines of the houses. When the last anointing is over, the bed is picked up and carried to the regular cremation ground, which is by the side of a stream or a lake. At Sarenga, where both Santals and non-Santals live, they share the same cremation ground. The pyre is known as the *sara*; it is constructed from north to south and the body is placed upon it with the head pointing to the south, this being the general Hindu custom as well. The foundation is made with large logs on which kindling wood and smaller pieces of firewood are laid, and the four corners are marked by driving stakes into the ground. Before the pyre is set alight all clothing is removed from the body, including the piece of string that has been fastened round the waist since a string was first placed there at the time of the *janam chatiar*. Leaves and small pieces of wood are placed over the body to "cover the shame". When the body is in position the hen is sacrificed. It is transfixed to one of the upright corner stakes with thorns. "The reason", said a Santal, "is this. One life has gone, and to save that life in the next world we send another life. By giving this other life we please *Jom Raj* (the king of the underworld according to Hindu mythology)."

When a married woman has died her husband has to apply fire to the corpse. In the case of a man the duty is performed by his eldest son, and failing a son it falls to the lot of the senior kinsman on the male side who is present. He takes in his hand a thin stick to the end of which a rag has been tied. This end he dips in the oil vessel and it is then set alight. Then, suported by two of his neighbours, he walks round the funeral pyre three times, after which he puts the burning cloth to the mouth of the corpse, looking in the opposite direction as he does so. Even in cases where the corpse is buried, fire must be applied to the mouth. When this has been done, the two men who have been supporting the chief mourner set fire to the two southern corners of the pyre, while one of them watches to see that the fire takes proper hold. It remains his duty to see that the fire burns

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765 787 which grains of rice are placed. These grains are both whole and broken and separate out when they are shaken up. The possessed youths utter the guttural-sounding grunts which are typical of persons in their condition, shake their heads from one side to another and jerk the winnowing fans up and down. When the spirits are fully in control they are addressed by one of the relatives. He calls on the name of the deceased and says: "Now, *Gôsâĕ*, we have given you this rice, speak well to us. Tell us, how did you die and how did you fall? Did you leave us at your own wish, or was it through some disease or through someone's enmity?" On the answer to this question will depend in most cases the subsequent proceedings of the mourners. Questions are asked until the mourners are satisfied that there is no more information to be gained. The spirit of the dead man is cautious in making accusations, and imputations of witchcraft or spirit activity in causing death are usually couched in general terms, for his relations will have recourse to the *ojha* and the *jan* for confirmation if they deem it necessary to do so. At the end of the conversation the spirits go from one to another of the assembled company, and addressing them by name they ask for a drink of water. In return they are supplied with beer to drink, after which they return to normal consciousness. Next, the animal for 765 769 782 the feast is offered to the spirit of the departed. A sacrificial square is marked out with flour in the courtyard and in it the animal is fed on sun-dried rice. Vermilion is applied to it in the usual manner of sacrifices, but the animal is slain with a blow on the back of its head. This animal is provided by the bereaved household, but in addition each of the houses in the village provides a hen to contribute to the feast. The invocation with the offering is as follows: "Take this, *Gôsâĕ*; we are giving this to you in order that you may be freed from *Jom Raj Hạḍur Raj*,[1] from the house of the *Suṇḍi* and the *Hạḍi*." The *Hạḍi* are the Hari caste, outcasts who tend the cremation grounds of the Hindus, and it may be that the *Suṇḍi*, who are now the sellers of drugs and liquor, have also been associated with the disposal of 765 264 the dead. When all the food is ready for the feast it is divided into three portions. One of these is for the people of the village, one for the bereaved household and one for their relatives, who have gathered whether they belong to the same village or have come from a distance for the occasion. As the food is being served to each person, the server tells him: "This piece is from the wing" or "This piece is from the leg"; all the meat is cut into small

[1] *Hạḍur Raj*, another name for the king of the underworld.

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765 within which three vermilion spots are made. The one who floats away the bones should be the one who placed fire to the mouth of the corpse at the burning. He changes his clothes and walks forward until he is quite covered by deep water. He then faces towards the east and releases the bones into the current together with the blood-besprinkled grains of rice. When he comes out of the water a further offering is made of earth from the river bank. This is placed on leaves and floated away with an invocation to the ancestors asking them to receive the spirit of the dead person. This done, the members of the party take a meal by the river bank, eating flattened rice and cakes that they have brought with them. They leave some of the food for the attendants and set out on their homeward way.

Babulal gave an account of the return of the Barikul party on August 18, 1939. He records that it was a hot day and the maize in the homestead fields was fast ripening. "Very early today those who had gone to the river returned to the village. We could hear them cry out '*Horibol, Horibol*'. When they arrived, the *mañjhi* and the *godet*' called everyone together and we washed the feet of the travellers. One person from each house [731] went to wash their feet, and in return they received a gift of sweetmeats from a parcel that the travellers had brought home with them. When the washing was finished each one went to his own house to drink beer, and then the mothers asked their sons: 'O my boy, at which place did you float away your father?' They replied saying: 'At the *Tel kupi* and *Tirio ghats*.' So all the people asked for news of their dead kinsfolk and took a meal, and then in the afternoon they went about their work." *Ghat* is the Bengali word for a landing place on the side of a river, and Babulal names in his account two of the places to which the Santals of the area go. *Tel kupi* is a small earthenware pot used for carrying oil, and *tirio* we have met before, as it means a flute, but I have not obtained any explanation of the names. The former name is a hybrid expression, for *tel* is a Bengali word, while *kupi* is Santali; the ordinary Santali word for oil is *sunum*.

765 The final feast takes place after the return from the river. It is known as *bhaṇḍan* and is in accordance with the means of the family concerned. When the guests have come together, three of the young men are possessed by the spirits of the dead person, the founder of the village and *Maraṅ Buru* respectively. On this occasion the spirits are asked if they are satisfied with all that has been done, and they are expected to give their assent. The [769] [782] animal set aside for the *bhaṇḍan* is offered to the spirit of the

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dead person, and when it is slain the side on which the animal falls is retained by the giver, while the upturned side is retained by the villagers. The expression used for the side on which the animal falls is *gur lotom*, and this term is also used for any animal that has been reserved for a forthcoming festival and then could not be used because of a death in the family during the interval. When the feast has been prepared, the guests are called to sit down by the host, who calls out three times: "Come along, all. It is time for the *bhat* and *bostom* to eat the rice." *Bhat* and *bostom* are the names of two beggar castes.[1] After all have eaten, a conversation takes place between the villagers on the following lines. A spokesman of the villagers speaks to the assembled company: "In virgin soil and uncut forest, O fathers, such and such a headman cut the trees and made a level plain where he put up huts to dwell in, O fathers. Things went well with them, O fathers, their numbers increased, they gathered together like a flock of doves, O fathers. Now in this house there has been a death and the people in it have been cleansed from defilement, O fathers." Next he addresses the headman: "O father headman, allow us to go to our homes, for all things have been completed." The headman replies: "Fathers, you may go. Go to Sikar[2] and bring from there Molon the washerman and Kisto the barber." The villagers ask the headman: "And what will they get from us?" To which he replies: "They ought to get from you a basket of rice and an uncastrated goat." Then the villagers ask to be excused: "O father, Sikar is a long way off and who is able to go? Let us be our own washerman and our own barber. Let it be said that from today all the work is finished for this world and the next." When they have been excused, those who carried the corpse to the burning ground have their say: "O fathers, O five, we gave and burnt some wood", whereupon they are given small pieces of burnt wood in exchange. Similarly, they speak of the spade which was used, in return for which they receive some meat. They tell how their eyebrows were singed in the fire and for this receive some beer in a new pot. They take these things away from the house to consume later.

So end the death ceremonies. Most of the living are thereby freed from their obligations to the dead one and also from the dangers to which this period in their lives has exposed them. As far as they could, the rites have ensured the future happiness of

[1] *Bostom* is a form of *Vaishnava*. Cf. reference in the *Karam* festival myth in Chapter 9, p. 118.

[2] A country in which the ancestors once dwelt, according to tradition.

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794 779 177 178 [152] The most important cause of tension is the acceptance of a theology—a new myth, as it may be called—that results in a new ordering of religious activities and social obligations. The shadowy figure of the Supreme Being is invested with personality and comes into the centre of consciousness. He is not merely the Creator to whom little is ascribed except a vague reference as the dispenser of good and bad weather; He is vitally concerned with human conduct. The stories of Genesis are grafted on to conceptions that are already held and affect the latter. The story of the Jews is appreciated as that of a people who suffered through a long history from oppression, and the story of the wanderings appeals to the Santal. It is altogether fitting that the One Saviour of all mankind should be born of a people with whom the Santal feels that he has much in common. The traditional story of the origin of mankind is held to supplement the biblical narrative. In preaching, the Santal constantly refers to Adam and Eve as *Pilcu Haṛam* and *Pilcu Buḍhi*; *Maraṅ Buru*, on the other hand, is equated with Satan, and the cult of worship that he instituted is regarded as a deception imposed on the Santals. To the Santal who has been led in any degree to appreciate the Christian teaching about God, the identification of *Maraṅ Buru* with Satan seems to be obvious. He led the first human pair into sin and revealed to them the secret of sexual intercourse, for which the polite name among the Santals is always *baṛic' kami*, or evil work. He caused their ancestors to wander through the forests and finally foisted on them the cult of the spirits centring in the worship of himself. It follows that there are certain things which a Christian may not do. They are cut off from any activity that savours of worship of the tribal spirits. They do not contribute in cash or in kind to the offerings associated with the village festivals. This in turn excludes them from the communal rejoicing, the dancing and the feasting which take place during the festivals. At such times they are frequently the only sober persons in the village. It is impossible to live in a village at the time of the great Spring and Harvest festivals without becoming acutely aware of the gulf which divides the Christians from their neighbours, and without realizing that the Christians are themselves deeply conscious of the gulf. The same is true of the clan sacrifices; but it is interesting to observe that rules of behaviour which are linked with the mythology of the clans still regulate the conduct of the village Christian to a very large extent. A Murmu who has a clan taboo against building a house with four sloping sides to the roof continues to live in the style of house

794 177 178 794 177 178 614 [752] [754]